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Oly bronze medallist and multiple Grand Slam doubles champ Leander Paes crosses over to BJP, exiting TMC after a brief stint, **P 10**

Transgender bill gets Prez nod

The transgender bill got the President's assent on Monday, and the community is exploring legal routes to challenge the amendments, even as there's uncertainty over the fate of over 32,000 certificates issued so far. TNN

Social media news in IT rules ambit

Govt has moved to stretch IT rules to news and current affairs shared by non-publishers on social media, which could enable action through the existing grievance redressal process. **P 5**

BMC gets its first woman chief

Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation has got its first woman municipal commissioner. IAS officer Ashwini Bhide's previous posting was as additional chief secretary in the CMO. **P 5**

Injured Ggn cyclist lies on road for 2 hrs

A cyclist who was injured in a hit and run in Gurgaon was found by his family lying bleeding by the roadside two hours later on Monday. He died Tuesday.

Doon shootout SUV serial traffic violator

The Delhi-registered SUV used by the Gen-Z nightclub staff during the shootout that killed a retd Brigadier in Doon had 11 pending traffic challans across 4 states.

Go to Hormuz and take your oil: Trump to allies

US Fuel Prices Top ₹100/L First Time Since 2022

Chidanand Rajghatta

Washington: In a pair of incendiary social media posts on Tuesday, US President Donald Trump told allies and partners to "go get your own oil" from an inflamed Gulf region or buy American energy, even as petrol prices in the US breached $4 a gallon (Rs 100/litre; it was less than $3 a month ago). Trump taunted allies, implicitly accusing them of cowardice, as they have declined to support what even domestic critics see as US' reckless war that is torching the Gulf region and the global economy.

Laying bare an extraordinary rupture in the transatlantic alliance, with European powers increasingly distancing themselves from the US, Trump lashed out at allies, asking them to "build up some delayed courage" and "start learning how to fight for yourself", because "the USA won't be there to help you anymore, just like you weren't there for us".

At the heart of the growing rift is a perception across European capitals, and indeed much of the world, that the US launched the war without consultation and now expects logistical and political backing as a matter of entitlement. Trump's war, ostensibly triggered by Israeli leader Benjamin Netanyahu, has disrupted energy supplies from the region and is threatening to tank the global economy, even as the MAGA boss is transparently opportunistic in telling "all of those countries that can't get jet fuel because of the Strait of Hormuz... I have a suggestion for you...buy from the US, we have plenty".

FULL COVERAGE: FLAP OPP, PAGES 5, 12, 14 & 15

▶Italy denies access, P 14

IRAN THREATENS TO HIT US TECH GIANTS

- Iran parliamentary panel **approves plan for toll on ships** in Hormuz. Ban on ships of US, Israel, those imposing sanctions
- US def secy Pete Hegseth warns Tehran that **war would be 'decisive'** in next few days if it does not make a deal
- Iran's Rev Guards say US cos in W Asia will be targeted. Name 18, including **Microsoft, Google, Apple, Tesla & Boeing**
- **US flying B-52 bombers over Iran**, chairman of Joint Chiefs of Staff says, suggesting **its air defences have been significantly degraded**

Photo: AP

Israel targets a building adjacent to Beirut's main airport road

- Israel says it would **occupy a swathe of southern Lebanon even after end of the war** against Hezbollah
- War could **wipe out $200bn** worth of economic growth across West Asia, says UN study

US hits Isfahan, home to Iran's N-site

President Trump on Tuesday shared footage of US attacks on the central Iranian city of Isfahan, home to one of three nuclear enrichment sites, where much of Iran's highly enriched uranium is believed to be stored. Nasa's fire-tracking satellites suggest the explosions happened near Mount Soffeh. Iran has not yet confirmed the attack. **P 14**

Iran hits fully laden oil tanker in Dubai

A drone attack by Iran sparked a fire on a fully laden Kuwaiti oil tanker, Al-Salmi, at Dubai port on Tuesday. Authorities said there was "no oil leakage and no injuries reported". Kuwait Petroleum Corp, the ship's owner, said the vessel's hull was damaged. The tanker, heading to Qingdao in China, was carrying 2 million barrels of Saudi and Kuwaiti crude. **P 14**

Summer mainly mild; heatwaves in May-June: IMD

New Delhi: Many parts of India are likely to see normal to below normal maximum (day) temperatures but warmer than usual nights in the April-June summer season, IMD said, while forecasting higher than normal number of heatwaves (by 2-8 days) in east, northeast and coastal peninsular India, **reports Vishwa Mohan**.

IMD chief Mrutyunjay Mohapatra said "above-normal heatwave days are likely in Rajasthan, Gujarat, Haryana, Punjab, Maharashtra, UP, Bihar, Jharkhand, Bengal, Odisha, Chhattisgarh, Telangana, Andhra, coastal TN and north Karnataka during April to June".

IMD forecast map shows higher heatwave days also in Delhi-NCR, mainly in May-June, as April in many parts, including northwest, may get above-normal rain.

▶Above normal temp, P 8

Revised Jaypee bid tops Adani offer, Vedanta tells SC

New Delhi: Mining billionaire Anil Agarwal's Vedanta Ltd has told SC that its tweaked bid for the bankrupt Jaiprakash Associates Ltd was rejected despite being better than Adani Group's offer.

In its petition challenging the lenders' decision to accept Adani's takeover offer, Vedanta contended that its addendum bid is about ₹3,400cr higher in gross value terms and roughly ₹500cr more in net present value compared to the Adani Group's offer. In the bid challenge process and final resolution plan submitted on Oct 14, 2025, Vedanta offered ₹3,770cr in upfront payment and ₹3,100cr at the end of the 365th day from the effective date to secured financial creditors. PTI

▶Panel accepted bid, P 6

State set to withdraw road tax exemption, e-cars to get costlier

Decision Not To Affect Electric Two-Wheelers

Suchith.Kidiyoor @timesofindia.com

Bengaluru: Buying an electric car in Karnataka may soon get costlier with the state govt preparing to withdraw 100% road tax exemption currently given for electric cars. Tax exemptions for electric two-wheelers will continue.

The 5% EV tax move comes at a time when India is ramping up electric mobility amid fears of a likely fuel price hike stoked by West Asia conflict. The proposal, part of Karnataka Motor Vehicles Taxation Amendment Bill 2026 passed in the recent legislature session, is awaiting the governor's assent to become law. The one-time tax is paid while purchasing a vehicle.

If the proposal goes through, then lifetime tax will be linked to the cost of the car. A Rs 20-lakh car would attract Rs 1.6 lakh in 8% tax slab. Transport minister Ramalinga Reddy said the tax will apply only to new vehicles and not retrospectively.

▶Alert customers, P 2

ELECTRIC SHOCK

- **5%*:** Cars priced up to ₹10 lakh
- **8%*:** ₹10 lakh-₹25 lakh
- **10%**:** Above ₹25 lakh

(*tax proposed; ** already in force)

E-VEHICLE SCORE (As of Feb 2026)

- 1.2 crore vehicles in B'luru; **4.1 lakh are electric**
- Two-wheelers: **3.2 lakh**
- Four-wheelers: **37,365**

Jobless techie kills self, wife jumps off 18th floor

Rajiv.Kalkod@timesofindia.com

Bengaluru: A 32-year-old IT engineer, who worked in US for five years before losing his job to AI-triggered cuts last year, was found hanging in his flat in an upscale apartment in Kothanur, north Bengaluru, Monday morning.

Within minutes of coming to know of her husband's death, his wife, who works with an IT major, went to the 18th floor of the apartment complex and leapt to her death.

The deceased from Telangana have been identified as Bhanu Chander Reddy and Bibi Shaziya Siraj, 31. Police said a note left by Reddy suggested he was upset over many issues, including health. Shaziya did not leave behind any note. The interfaith couple shifted from Telangana to Bengaluru after Shaziya secured a job with IBM.

▶Had anxiety issues, P 3

IN 20 MINUTES

- Twenty minutes after hubby **Bhanu Chander Reddy** was found hanging, **Bibi Shaziya Siraj** jumped from 18th floor of their apartment
- Reddy **worked in US & lost his job due to AI-triggered cuts last year**, but Shaziya had secured a job with IBM
- Married for two years, the **couple shifted to B'luru 8 months ago.** Reddy's death note says he was upset over many issues

K'taka moots adoption plan for small temples

Bengaluru: The state Muzrai department is planning to introduce an adoption model for thousands of low-income temples while promoting temple tourism. This is part of efforts to improve infrastructure and generate sustainable revenue, **reports Pearl Dsouza**.

Data shows a stark skew in terms of fund allocation to temples: In 2025-26, Rs 85 lakh was allocated to two Group A temples, which works out to about Rs 42.5 lakh for each. In contrast, Rs 9 crore was earmarked for 111 Group C temples, which comes to only about Rs 8.1 lakh per temple. The new proposal seeks to correct this imbalance, too.

Under the adoption model, ownership of temple properties will remain with the govt, but facilities such as guest houses, parking and other amenities could be developed through private participation.

▶Lack proper mgmt, P 4

BJP: Will use 1950 Act daily to expel Assam infiltrators

Guwahati: BJP Tuesday unveiled its manifesto for Assam polls, pledging to implement the Immigrants (Expulsion from Assam) Act, 1950 to fast-track detection and deportation of illegal migrants and free encroached land.

"Under the Immigrants (Expulsion from Assam) Act, 1950, a DC is empowered to expel an illegal foreigner within 24 hours. We will use this act every single day so that we can push back the Bangladeshi infiltrators," CM Himanta Biswa Sarma said after the manifesto was released by finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman. TNN

▶Law Nehru opposed, P 6

Quick response: Linking Tele Manas, 112 turns lifesaver

4k Calls From Bengaluru In Just 2 Months

Jahnavi@timesofindia.com

Bengaluru: The integration of Tele Manas with Namma 112 helpline in Feb is reshaping the way emergency response functions in Bengaluru, enabling faster identification of mental health crises and more coordinated and specialised interventions.

Tele Manas (14416) is the national mental health helpline number of the Union health ministry, for which Nimhans is the apex nodal centre. Since the integration, Tele Manas has received 4,052 calls from Bengaluru between Feb 4 and March 22. The integration has allowed emergency responders to identify mental health distress during calls and connect individuals to trained counsellors and mental health professionals in real time, ensuring timely and appropriate intervention.

One such intervention involved a 33-year-old man who made 34 calls to 112 marked by aggression, disorganised speech, and delusions — claiming to be a politician's son, a senior police officer or even historical figures like Mahatma Gandhi and Napoleon, while alleging abduction and poisoning. Though he was identified as a missing person and reunited with his family, the calls continued.

The case was escalated to Tele Manas as signs of mental illness were recognised by the responders.

A mental health professional identified a four-year history of untreated psychiatric illness, medication non-adherence, aggression, and sleep disturbances. Coordinated efforts between 112, Tele Manas, and the family led to his admission to a tertiary healthcare centre, with significant improvement within three days.

In another case that underscored the system's life-saving potential, Dr Naveen Kumar C, professor of psychiatry and head of community psychiatry at Nimhans, shared the instance of a 35-year-old man from Bengaluru who contacted Tele Manas with persistent suicidal thoughts. A counsellor provided emotional support before escalating the case to a mental health professional, who, upon assessment, found the caller to be in a secluded location and in possession of poison. With support from local police and emergency services, the individual was located, safely rescued and taken to a hospital for care.

"The most common complaints regarding which callers have contacted Tele Manas include sadness of mood and related symptoms, generalised anxiety/panic/phobia-related symptoms, stress related to exams, workplace or relationships, and sleep disturbances, followed by other issues linked to bio-socio-occupational dysfunction," Dr Naveen said. Most callers from Bengaluru were in the 20–30 age group, followed by those aged 30–40, with a slight predominance of male callers (56.5%), he added.

The International Institute of Information Technology Bangalore (IIITB) is providing the technological backbone for this initiative. TK Srikanth, professor of practice and head of IIITB's e-health research centre, said, "A customisable IVR, centralised and scalable infrastructure, minimal requirements for users, strong privacy safeguards, and continuous training have enabled consistent and accessible mental health support."

EMERGENCY ACTION

- A 33-year-old man made 34 calls to 112 marked by aggression, disorganised speech and delusions — claiming to be a politician's son, a senior police officer or even historical figures like Mahatma Gandhi and Napoleon, while alleging abduction and poisoning. He was rescued, re-united with family and admitted to a tertiary healthcare centre for treatment. He reported significant improvement within three days
- A 35-year-old man contacted Tele Manas with persistent suicidal thoughts. A counsellor provided immediate emotional support before escalating the case to a mental health professional, who, upon assessment, found the caller to be in a secluded location and in possession of poison. With support from local police and emergency services, the individual was located, safely rescued and taken to a hospital for care

METRO WRAP

Traffic curbs for Karaga festival

In view of the city's flagship Karaga festival, traffic will be restricted between City Market and Mysore Bank Circle on Avenue Road from Wednesday midnight till 6am Thursday. Motorists have been advised to take SJP Road towards Town Hall and continue along Kempegowda Road to reach their destinations.

File photo

Diversion on Seppings Road

With Muthyalamma fair being held near Seppings Road in Pulikeshinagar, traffic has been restricted from Coles Park junction to Seppings Road between 6am Wednesday and 6pm Thursday. Similarly, there are traffic restrictions between St John's Church Road and Narayana Pillai Street; War Memorial junction to St John's Church Road.

Lokayukta summons SWM officials

Karnataka Lokayukta Tuesday summoned senior waste management officials following inspections across the city that revealed lapses in solid waste clearance. Lokayukta officials said garbage piles were left unattended on roadsides at multiple locations, which posed a serious health risk to residents. Taking cognisance, Lokayukta summoned senior officials, including the chief operating officer of Bengaluru Solid Waste Management Limited, directing them to appear in person and submit a detailed report explaining the shortcomings by April 2.

EV tax move stokes concern, may impact vehicle adoption

Measure Taken To Generate Addl Funds: Min

Suchith.Kidiyoor
@timesofindia.com

Bengaluru: Govt's decision to levy tax on electric cars has sparked concern, with stakeholders warning it could slow down EV adoption rate in the state. They argue that incentives remain critical as the technology is still evolving and adoption in the state trails conventional vehicles by several miles.

The numbers underline the gap. In Bengaluru, EVs accounted for just 4.1 lakh of over 1.2 crore vehicles as of Feb 2026. Two-wheelers dominated with 3.2 lakh units, while electric cars numbered 37,365. In Feb alone, 9,250 EVs were registered — nearly 6,900 two-wheelers and 991 cars — reflecting the pace of adoption.

Transport minister Ramalinga Reddy defended the move, saying the proposed lifetime tax across price categories aims to boost revenue. "The state expects to generate Rs 259 crore. The measure is intended to mobilise additional funds," he said.

Confusion, however, persists. Social media posts have flagged provisions in the Bill that refer to tax slabs based on vehicle age, triggering fears of retrospective taxation. A senior transport official clarified that such slabs apply only when vehicles registered in other states are re-registered in Karnataka after obtaining an NOC, and not to existing EV owners in the state.

A dealer said they have been informing customers with pending bookings that road tax will now apply to electric cars. "Earlier, there was a complete exemption for EVs priced up to Rs 25 lakh. Going forward, buyers will have to factor in the additional cost," the dealer said. He added that no official communication has yet been received from regional transport offices on the date from which the proposed tax — if approved — will be implemented.

On electric mobility

Pawan Mulukutla, executive director of World Resources Institute India, said: "Internal combustion engine vehicles (which usually run on petrol or diesel) are a major contributor to urban emissions. In a city like Bengaluru, with its high-vehicle density, accelerating the transition to electric mobility is critical. Any policy intervention that reduces the cost competitiveness of electric vehicles could undermine this shift. Karnataka was among the early adopters of a dedicated electric mobility policy, and it is important to ensure subsequent measures do not inadvertently slow down EV adoption. If taxes are extended across all EV segments, it risks making them less attractive compared to petrol and diesel counterparts, potentially delaying the transition to cleaner mobility."

File photo

BIG GAP: In Bengaluru, electric vehicles made up just 4.1 lakh of the over 1.2 crore vehicles on the road as of Feb 2026

NUMBERS DRIVING EV SCENE

Karnataka has more than **3.4 crore vehicles**, of which **electric vehicles account for more than 7 lakh**

Electric two-wheelers	Cars
6 lakh	51,663

IN FEB 2026

	@Bengaluru	@Karnataka
TOTAL EVs REGISTERED	9,250	17,384
TWO-WHEELERS	6,900	14,131
CARS	991	1,517

— Source: Transport dept

Dealers alert customers on price rise

▶ Continued from page 1

The policy pivot comes as govt looks to shore up revenues amid rising expenditure on its flagship guarantee schemes. For 2026-27, the transport department was given a target of Rs 15,500 crore — Rs 500 crore higher than the previous fiscal. Officials estimate that taxing electric cars across segments could generate Rs 259 crore annually.

This marks a significant departure from Karnataka's policy on tax exemption for electric vehicles. To promote green mobility, in 2016, govt had announced tax exemption for EVs to accelerate adoption.

In May 2024, govt decided to bring luxury e-cars under the tax net by imposing a 10% lifetime tax on high-end electric cars. The latest proposal extends levy taxes on all variants of electric cars. Dealers have started alerting customers about a likely increase in on-road prices, including those who have made advance bookings.

CITY CELEBRATES MAHAVIR JAYANTI WITH FERVOUR

Muthu P

Over 1,000 people gathered at Freedom Park Tuesday to celebrate 2625th Janm Kalyanak Mahotsav on the occasion of Mahavir Jayanti. Organised by Jain Yuva Sangathan, the event kicked off around 8.30am, with a procession starting from Town Hall to Freedom Park.

The procession saw performers of Yakshagana and women in traditional turbans carrying kalashas. There was a cultural spectacle with messages of social harmony and progress. The programme, hosted jointly by Jain Yuva Sangathan and its Seva Trust, had multiple initiatives, including health check-ups, blood donation drives and community outreach activities. "This is the first time I'm attending the utsav and it has been a good experience. I came on my father's suggestion and got to see many cultural activities," said Sambhav S Baid, a 20-year-old resident of RR Nagar.

Nalina, a resident of Shanthinagar and a native of Rajasthan, said, "The sense of unity stands out. Celebrations of this scale outside Rajasthan are impressive."

Heat, contaminated food drive surge in stomach infections

Jahnavi@timesofindia.com

Bengaluru: As summer heat tightens its grip on the city, a surge in gastrointestinal (GI) infections is sweeping through outpatient departments. Contaminated food and unsafe drinking water, combined with dehydration and exhausting long-distance travel, are creating a perfect storm for illness. Patients are showing symptoms of vomiting, diarrhoea, stomach cramps and constipation. Since early March, doctors are seeing no fewer than 6-10 such cases every day.

"We have been seeing a slight spike in gastrointestinal infections over the past couple of weeks, likely due to the onset of summer. The major causes are food contamination, poor hand hygiene — especially among children — and faster bacterial growth in food because of warmer climate. This can irritate the gut and lead to infections," said Dr Amjad Khan H, head of emergency medicine, Fortis Hospital, Cunningham Road.

"While we see such cases throughout the year, there has been a noticeable increase this summer. Usually, patients manage mild symptoms like two to three episodes of vomiting, diarrhoea or stomach cramps at home. However, this time we are seeing more severe cases, with patients reporting 10 to 15 episodes of loose motions per day, persistent vomiting and severe abdominal pain. Some are also presenting with low blood pressure," he added.

Doctors noted that families travelling during summer vacation are returning with bacterial GI infections, mainly caused by consumption of raw food that may not have been stored properly.

"Lifestyle changes during holidays — like increased travel and eating out — also contribute to infections. People tend to consume more ice cream, fruit salads and street food, which can increase exposure to infections," said Dr Vijay Kumar HJ, senior consultant, medical gastroenterology, hepatology & interventional endoscopy, KIMS Hospitals, Bengaluru.

Other contributing factors include drinking water sourced from tankers and construction activity, leading to contamination. "During summer, as groundwater levels drop, many households are forced to depend on tanker water. It is difficult to ascertain the source of this water, and it is at a higher risk of contamination," Dr Vijay said, adding: "Road and infrastructure work can damage BWSSB pipelines, leading to contamination."

Besides the usual GI infection symptoms, doctors observed some additional issues in patients. "We're seeing increased acidity, bloating, constipation and loss of appetite, largely linked to dehydration, irregular meals and prolonged heat exposure. In a few cases, fatigue and dizziness are early signs of electrolyte imbalance," said Dr CM Parameshwara, CEO & founder, Smiles Institute of Gastroenterology.

HOW TO STAY SAFE

- Drink only boiled water
- Avoid consuming raw salads, cut fruits, beverages with ice from outside
- Ensure proper storage of all food items
- Avoid eating leftover or overnight food that may be contaminated
- Make sure vegetables are thoroughly washed before cooking or consumption
- Maintain regular hand hygiene, particularly before eating
- Be cautious about eating out and ensure food is well-cooked and hygienic
- Keep ORS at home

Source | City doctors

FRRO directed to deport Thai woman caught in sex racket

Bengaluru: The high court has directed the Foreigners Regional Registration Office (FRRO) to take steps as per the standard operating procedure (SOP) to deport a 42-year-old prostitution racket survivor back to her country, Thailand.

If the SOP does not permit deportation, prosecution against her shall continue, Justice M Nagaprasanna said in his order while disposing of her petition.

On Feb 3, on getting information that some people were running a brothel and trafficking women from different places, a raid was conducted and the Thai woman was arrested along with another accused. The petitioner was rescued and sent to FRRO custody on Feb 5. Since then, she has been staying at a detention centre. Police registered the crime for offences punishable under Section 143 (2) of BNS and Sections 3, 4 and 5 of Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act, 1956.

The Thai woman moved the high court, seeking deportation to her country. She claimed she had come to India in search of a job and fallen prey to the accused. She claimed to be suffering from psychological illness due to the long legal process involving police investigation and she was unable to return to her country as her visa and passport had expired.

On the other hand, Shanthi Bhushan H, deputy solicitor-general, appearing for FRRO, submitted details of the steps to be taken in terms of the model SOP.

After perusing the materials on record, Justice Nagaprasanna noted the central govt had, on Nov 25, 2025, issued an SOP, governing withdrawal of prosecution in cases involving foreign nationals, with the objective of facilitating their deportation. FRRO should follow the SOP and take steps to deport the woman to Thailand, he said. TNN

LPG crisis: Auto drivers wait in long queues at fuel stns

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Bengaluru: Even as state govt maintains that there is no shortage of auto LPG, auto drivers in several parts of the city are reporting difficulties in refuelling.

Auto drivers complain supply constraints have forced them to visit multiple bunks and wait in long queues. At several stations, police have stepped in to manage crowds, urging drivers not to block roads while lining up for fuel. On Tuesday evening, police directed drivers to move to other stations after a long queue of autorickshaws spilled onto the road near an auto LPG outlet close to Mysuru Satellite Town bus station. In many areas, fuel stations have also put up notices indicating "no stock".

The president of the Auto Rickshaw Drivers' Union, CN Sreenivas, said the situation has caused significant hardship. "Drivers are often forced to check three to four stations before finding fuel, and even then have to wait for long periods. The rising cost is another concern. Auto LPG is priced at around Rs 80 per litre at state-run outlets and between Rs 82 and Rs 95 at private stations," he said, urging authorities to address the issue at the earliest.

Auto drivers warn that if supply disruptions persist, it could begin to affect their daily earnings and livelihood.

As on March 29, the department of food, civil supplies and consumer affairs maintained there was no shortage of auto LPG in the state. It stated oil companies were supplying an average of 64.9 tonnes of auto LPG per day, up from 57.6 tonnes before the West Asia conflict.

Syed Asif

Auto drivers say they're forced to check 3-4 stations before finding fuel

Cops studied phone-theft cases reported in Chennai & Mumbai

▶ Continued from page 1

Investigators said the gang had bought RCB jerseys to blend into the crowd, stole complimentary passes from spectators to gain entry into the stadium, and stole mobile phones when fans rushed to buy food during intervals or were exiting the stadium after the match.

Soon after Saturday's match, mobile-theft complaints poured in by the dozen. Deputy commissioner of police (central) Akshay M Hakay said they identified the prime suspect with the help of digital evidence. "Kumar and minor associates had smartly picked complimentary passes from spectators waiting near the gates. As planned, they picked phones near the gates and refreshment counters," he said.

A few kids in 'RCB jersey' were caught stealing mobile phones near refreshment areas during breaks. "My husband, too, lost his phone at the P3 stand. Many others were also complaining of losing phones. We lodged a complaint with Cubbon Park police. And we found many more people were filing similar complaints," a woman spectator said.

Following multiple complaints from the P3 stand, police reviewed CCTV footage and identified a few theft suspects

Police said they studied similar cases reported from Chepauk Stadium in Chennai and Wankhede Stadium in Mumbai. "Since there were many complaints from P3 Stand, we scanned the CCTV footage and zeroed in on a few suspects, including Kumar," an officer said.

Check-in to courtroom: Guest told to pay ₹16L

Vindhya.Pabolu
@timesofindia.com

Bengaluru: A guest who checked into a hotel on Palace Road for a short stay ended up enjoying its hospitality for 63 days in a suite — and nearly 196 days overall — without clearing his dues. The dispute over prolonged stay finally landed in court, which ordered him to pay the full outstanding amount along with interest.

The saga began on March 27, 2025, when Radisson Blu Atria allotted a room to Mohamad Rafeeque Pallivalappil, a 65-year-old resident of Kurnool, Andhra Pradesh, and managing director of OnlineFarms Gate India Pvt Ltd, Kochi, at a tariff of Rs 5,737.5 per day plus GST.

At his request, the hotel upgraded his stay to the more expensive suite on Aug 6, 2025. The revised tariff was communicated through phone calls and WhatsApp messages, and the guest continued to occupy the suite.

While an initial payment of Rs 80,000 was made, the guest soon became irregular in clearing the room rent. Despite repeated reminders and demands from the hotel management, he neither cleared the mounting dues nor vacated the premises. As per hotel's records, by Oct 8, 2025, the total bill had escalated to Rs 12.9 lakh. Against this, payments amounting to Rs 3.2 lakh were received, leaving an outstanding balance of about Rs 9.7 lakh.

Left with no option, the hotel issued a legal notice on Oct 24, 2025. In a reply dated Nov 6, the guest admitted the liability and issued a cheque dated Nov 7 for Rs 10 lakh. However, it was returned unpaid with the endorsement "insufficient funds." Despite this, the guest continued to occupy the suite.

With no way out, the hotel, represented by its manager, filed a civil suit on Dec 4 with the LXXXVI additional city civil & sessions court (commercial court). Though summons were served and a memo of undertaking filed, the defendant failed to appear before the court or file a written statement. He remained absent and was placed ex parte.

After examining the records (invoices, legal notice, and bounced cheque), the court recorded that, on Dec 6, a bailiff was appointed to open the suite, following which possession was taken back and belongings worth Rs 5,000 were inventoried and handed over, making eviction unnecessary.

The court observed that records clearly established the guest's stay, mounting dues, partial payment, and outstanding dues. It noted that the defendant had admitted liability in his reply and issued a Rs 10 lakh cheque, which was dishonoured due to insufficient funds. With no rebuttal evidence and the defendant remaining ex parte, the court found no reason to disbelieve the hotel's claims.

The bench, presided over by judge Jithendranath CS, on March 13, ordered the defendant to pay Rs 15.8 lakh with interest at 18% per annum from Nov 17, 2025, till realisation. The court also directed him to pay damages at Rs 15,750 per day plus GST from the date of suit till Dec 9, 2025.

AI

COSTLY SUITE STAY

- Hotel guest, 65, stays for 196 days (including 63 in suite) without clearing dues
- Bill rises to ₹12.9 lakh; only ₹3.2 lakh paid, leaving around ₹9.7 lakh outstanding despite repeated reminders
- Guest admits liability and issues a cheque for ₹10 lakh, which promptly bounces
- Commercial court orders payment of ₹15.8 lakh and additional daily damages

ALMANAC (1.4.2026)

Meena Masa 18 – Shri Parabhava Nama Samvatsara – Uttarayana – Vasantha Ritu – Tithi: Chaitra Sukla Chaturdasi h. 7-07
Nakshatra: Uttara Phalguni h. 16-18 Yoga: Vriddhi h. 14-51. 12 Shawwal
Rahu Kalam Noon — 1.30pm

— KL Vidya Shankara Somayaji

BIN THERE, DONE THAT

Segregate your garbage or pay ₹1,000 from today

Repeat Violations To Cost ₹2k | Spl Teams To Ensure Compliance

Nithya.Mandyam
@timesofindia.com

Bengaluru: Starting April 1, residents of Bengaluru who fail to separate wet and dry waste will face a Rs 1,000 fine, with penalties doubling to Rs 2,000 for repeat violations. Bengaluru Solid Waste Management Ltd has tightened enforcement, making waste segregation at source mandatory for households and establishments alike.

"We are rolling out stricter enforcement under Solid Waste Management Rules, with authorities launching a city-wide special drive to ensure compliance. The initiative will be carried out by link workers and dedicated solid waste management teams across Bengaluru. Segregation at source is no longer optional, and waste generators must mandatorily divide their waste into these categories: wet waste, dry waste, sanitary and special care waste," said BSWML CEO Karee Gowda.

Sanitary and special care waste includes items such as diapers, sanitary napkins and hazardous or domestic biomedical waste that require careful handling.

Importantly, the enforcement will extend to the collection chain as well. Auto-tipper drivers and pourakarmikas have been instructed to collect only segregated waste. They are also required to wear protective gear, including uniforms, gloves, masks and gumboots, to ensure safety and hygiene during handling of waste.

"The decision was aimed at addressing Bengaluru's growing waste crisis through behavioural change at the household level. Segregation at source is the foundation of efficient waste processing. Despite repeated awareness campaigns, compliance has remained inconsistent. With enforcement, we aim to ensure that every citizen takes responsibility," Gowda said.

The city's waste processing infrastructure is designed to handle segregated waste streams, and mixing waste at source undermines recycling and composting efforts, Gowda said, adding: "We are also trying to build a system where waste is treated as a resource. Citizens must cooperate for this initiative to succeed."

"The city generates nearly 6,000 metric tonnes of waste daily, and the biggest challenge is source-level segregation, which leads to a bottleneck in scientific disposal. By ensuring compliance at the first point of generation, authorities hope to improve recycling rates, reduce landfill burden," Gowda told **TOI**.

The enforcement drive is expected to be closely monitored in its initial weeks, with teams deployed across wards to check compliance and raise awareness alongside penal action.

TOI

MANDATORY 4-STREAM WASTE SEGREGATION AT SOURCE
- Segregate into wet, dry, sanitary & hazardous at household/commercial level
- ULBs to stop collecting mixed waste
- User fee & penalties for non-compliance

BULK WASTE GENERATOR (BWG) CRITERIA
Area **>20,000 sqm**
Water use **>40,000 L/day**
Waste **>100 kg/day**
- Process wet waste on-site (where feasible)
- Obtain extended BWG responsibility (EBWGR) certificate
- Ensure safe disposal, polluter pays

DIGITAL SWM & ACCOUNTABILITY PORTAL
- Track waste-generation data
- Monitor segregation & processing
- Audit compliance & collections
- BWGs to process their waste
- BWGs to upload daily data
- Limited landfill allowance
- To upload daily data
- Limited landfill allowance
- User charges & fines enforced

HOW TO SEGREGATE

Wet waste (biodegradable): Kitchen waste, food leftovers, vegetable peels, garden waste

Dry waste (recyclable): Plastics, cardboard, paper, glass, metal, tetra packs

Sanitary & special care waste: Diapers, sanitary napkins and hazardous or domestic biomedical waste

Auto-tipper drivers and pourakarmikas have been instructed to collect only segregated waste. They must wear protective gear, including uniforms, gloves, masks and gumboots, to ensure safety during waste handling

CAG report flags lapses in faculty PhD programme

SruthySusan.Ullas
@timesofindia.com

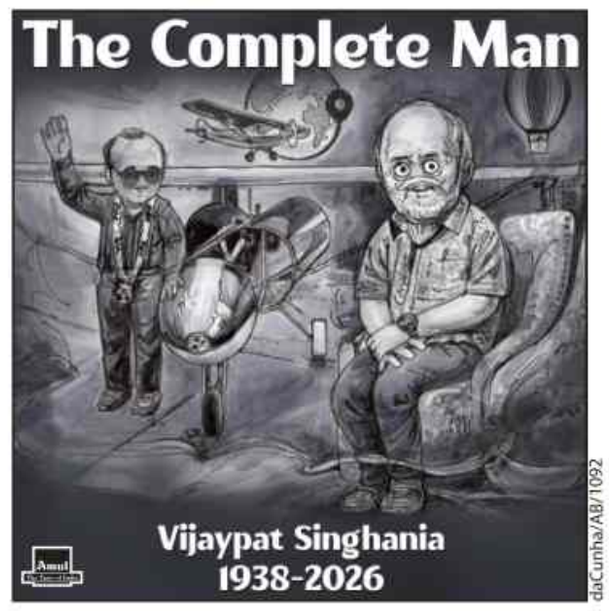
Bengaluru: A compliance audit of the department of technical education has revealed that 15 out of 19 professors deputed for higher studies failed to complete their doctorates within the prescribed period.

As per the Quality Improvement Programme under All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE), faculty members of govt engineering colleges and management institutions can pursue PhD courses to upgrade their expertise and capabilities. The duration of the programme is three years, during which the candidates have to complete all the academic requirements. In exceptional cases, the window is extended by a maximum of one year.

According to Comptroller and Auditor General of India report for 2024, as many as 19 lecturers of govt engineering colleges and polytechnics were deputed to pursue PhD between 2017-18 and 2020-21. Of these, 15 did not complete their doctorate within the prescribed time. The remaining four faculty members did so, albeit with delays of up to 33 months.

As per the rules, if govt concludes that sufficient progress has not been shown by the candidate or the course has not been completed within the prescribed time, the period of deputation is to be terminated and the entire expenditure incurred on deputation is to be recovered from the candidate. However, the amount — estimated to be Rs 5.7 crore — was not recovered from the professors.

In Sept 2025, govt said all such cases of course discontinuation are being examined. After promising that action would be taken as per the rules of Karnataka Civil Services Act, it also issued letters to the commissioner of the collegiate and technical education department to recover money in such cases. "Govt has decided to recover 50% of the amount from retired employees and 100% from others. We've submitted a proposal in this regard, and it has been approved by govt. Based on this, we have initiated the recovery process," said H Prasanna, director of the department of technical education.



Tech council's former MD convicted in assets case

Bengaluru: A special court for Lokayukta cases convicted V Muniyappa, former managing director of Karnataka Council for Technological Upgradation (KCTU) at Basava Bhavana in Bengaluru, in connection with a disproportionate assets case.

He was sentenced to three years' imprisonment and told to pay fine of Rs 4.5 crore. In case he fails to pay, he has to undergo another six months of imprisonment, special judge KM Radhakrishna said in his order. Muniyappa's period of service relating to the crime was between Dec 9, 1982, and July 2014. The accused accumulated assets worth over Rs 7.3 crore as against his known sources of income at Rs 4.1 crore.

The special judge detailed lapses on the part of investigation and govt officials. He criticised the work of inspector TV Manjunath in particular. "He committed blunders while investigating admissions by witnesses regarding monetary transactions, including bank transactions involving family members of Muniyappa, valuation of seized gold ornaments, land holdings, etc," the judge said. These kinds of lapses not only help the real culprits to escape, but also end in acquittal of cases, the judge said. TNN

Elderly couple leaves bag with ₹7L gold on berth, RPF recovers it within hours

Anush.S@timesofindia.com

Bengaluru: On Tuesday, a senior couple travelling from Pune to Bengaluru accidentally left behind a purse containing valuable gold ornaments on their train.

Acting swiftly on a complaint, Railway Protection Force (RPF), Bengaluru division, traced and recovered the bag and returned it to the passengers.

Manjunath and Sunitha (names changed) had alighted from Train no. 11301 Udyan Express at Yelahanka early in the morning and headed home. It was only after reaching their residence that Sunitha, 58, realised the purse was missing. Their son then promptly lodged a Rail Madad complaint at 4.50am.

The complainant reported that a handbag had been left behind in coach B1 of the train. Acting promptly, the RPF control room alerted on-duty staff, including head constable N Sukumar, who was on escort duty aboard the train.

Following instructions, Sukumar rushed to the third AC coach and located the unattended bag on a lower berth. The train had already crossed KR Pura by then. Around 5.15am, the bag was secured and later handed over to an RPF constable at Bengaluru Cantonment station upon arrival.

FAST-TRACK RECOVERY

"I got a call from my superiors when I was inspecting a sleeper compartment, and the train had already passed KR Pura by that time. I reached the coach and saw the bag was left behind on the lower berth. It's not the first time that such incidents have occurred. Passengers should report their loss immediately, as was done in this case," Sukumar said.

The bag was returned to the complainant later in the day after due verification. RPF officials said it contained gold ornaments weighing about 50 grams, valued at Rs 7.5 lakh, along with Rs 3,500 in cash — all recovered intact.

The complainant credited the quick action to Rail Madad system, noting the swift response from railway authorities.

Techie suffered from anxiety related to joblessness: Police

▶Continued from page 1

They moved into a flat on the eighth floor of Tower 6 of Nikoo Homes, Bhartiya City, Thanisandra Main Road, eight months ago.

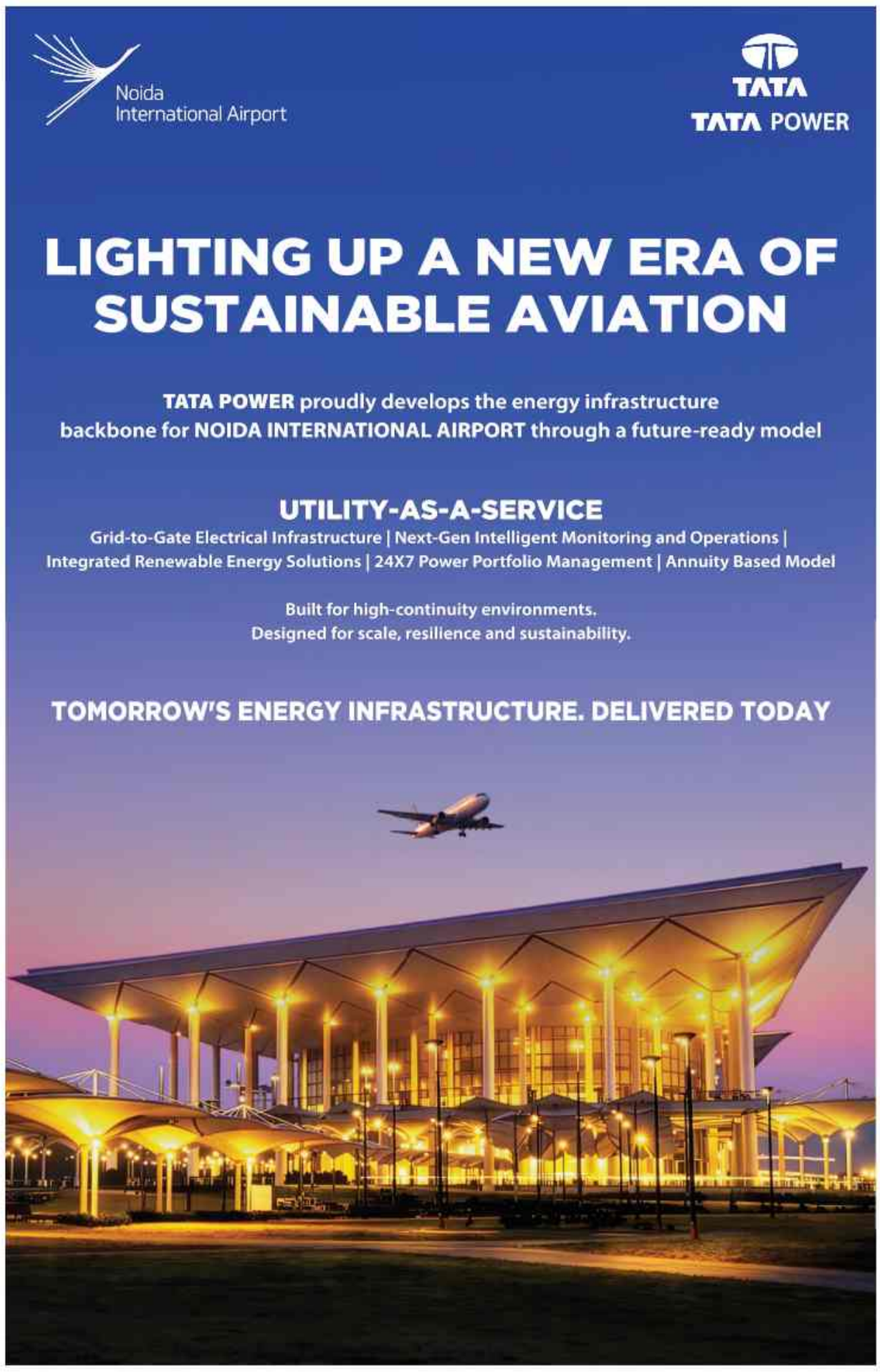
Police said Shaziya, who returned from Hyderabad Monday morning, called up security personnel around 7.30am, stating Reddy was not opening the bedroom door or responding to calls on his cellphone. They broke open the door to find him hanging from the ceiling fan of the room. A death note was on the table.

A shocked Shaziya read the note. She was present in the flat for about 20 minutes. As neighbours rushed into the flat and were busy calling in police and ambulance, Shaziya reportedly slipped out of the house, went to the 18th floor and took the fatal plunge. She died instantly, police said.

Preliminary probe said the couple was married for two and a half years. "Shaziya hadn't informed her family of the marriage, while Reddy's parents knew," an officer said, quoting the couple's family and colleagues. After losing his job in the US, Reddy was looking for suitable employment there. He returned to Hyderabad and lived with his wife, planning to find a job in India. Since Shaziya had kept the marriage a secret, it became difficult for the couple to live in Hyderabad — home to many of the couple's relatives. Around that time, they shifted to Bengaluru.

Reddy faced health issues, caused mainly by anxiety related to joblessness. Besides, he was facing a financial crunch, a police officer said.

COUPLE SUICIDE



Zameer's absence: DKS says Cong runs on ideology, not individuals

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Davanagere/Bagalkot: Brushing aside the absence of housing minister BZ Zameer Ahmed Khan from the bypoll campaign, deputy chief minister and state Congress president DK Shivakumar Tuesday asserted the party functions on ideology and collective effort and not individuals.

TOI

SOMETHING FISHY? Zameer Ahmed Khan, who is campaigning in Kerala, seeks votes for Aroor segment candidate Shanimol Usman

DANCE OF DEMOCRACY

"It does not run on DK Shivakumar, Siddaramaiah, or Zameer Ahmed Khan. We have been working collectively and consistently for elections," said Shivakumar, who arrived in Davanagere to campaign for the first time since the polls were announced. He was accompanied by AICC general secretary Randeep Singh Surjewala. Shivakumar had been campaigning in Assam over the past two days.

Zameer is said to be annoyed over remarks by cabinet colleague SS Mallikarjun, father of Congress' Davanagere South candidate Samarth. During ticket distribution, Mallikarjun is said to have objected to Zameer's push for a Muslim candidate, questioned his role, and asked him to limit himself to Bengaluru. He is also said to have suggested that Zameer stay away from campaigning. Zameer is considered a close associate of chief minister Siddaramaiah, who in Bagalkot, said Zameer would join the campaign soon.

Shivakumar, meanwhile, highlighted Congress outreach, saying, "Congress party is taking all communities and sections along. Late Shamanur Shivashankarappa, who was national president of the Veerashaiva Lingayat Mahasabha, made immense contributions to this constituency. I conducted a separate survey here, and people remember his help during the pandemic and his work in the education sector."

On opposition criticism, he said, "BJP calls our contributions minorities appeasement and labels us as a Muslim party. Protecting minorities is our responsibility. With this perspective, we have given a legislative council position to K Abdul Jabbar from this region, and also provided Muslim representation in Shiggaon assembly seat. Sixteen corporation board chairperson posts were given to minorities."

'Cong win will worsen graft'

BJP patriarch BS Yediyurappa accused Congress govt of misusing its "brutal majority" and warned that a win in the bypolls would embolden it further. "Corruption is rampant and chief minister Siddaramaiah isn't concerned about the welfare of people. His govt resembles a 'Tughlaq Darbar'," Yediyurappa said while campaigning in Bagalkot. "I appeal with folded hands to voters of both segments to teach Congress a lesson by ensuring BJP candidates win."

On expelled BJP legislator Basanagouda Patil Yatnal offering to campaign, Yediyurappa said, "Let anyone come; there are opportunities. I welcome it." He also alleged Siddaramaiah and his cabinet colleagues were camping in both constituencies out of fear. "They are worried about defeat," he said.

Dismissing BJP's claims of fear, Siddaramaiah said such remarks reflected the opposition's own concerns. He defended giving tickets to family members of deceased legislators saying it was a Congress tradition.

784 villages across Kalyana Karnataka ran dry last year

Pearl.DSouza@timesofindia.com

Bengaluru: To avert a drinking water crisis this summer, preparedness is under way not just in water-starved Kalyana Karnataka region, but also statewide.

Last year, 784 villages across Kalyana Karnataka ran dry — 266 in Kalaburagi alone, followed by Bidar (201), Raichur (147), Koppal (88), Vijayanagara (42), and Yadgir (40). In 2025-26 in Raichur, projects worth Rs 2.1 crore were taken up, including leasing private borewells, deepening existing ones, building new ones, laying pipelines, and repairing RO plants. Vijayanagara spent Rs 60.7 lakh for 40 villages and another Rs 5.5 crore for 201 villages. Kalaburagi spent Rs 1.2 crore, while Yadgir spent Rs 13.5 crore, responses furnished by the rural development and panchayat raj (RDPR) department in the recent assembly session show.

Conversely, Koppal did not use any of the Rs 2 crore grants allocated for similar works, a record which Raghavendra Basavaraj Hitnal, Koppal MLA, disputes.

"The Rs 2 crore was fully used, and the water situation was managed," Hitnal told **TOI**. "It could be an administrative error. We do not foresee a crisis this year since projects are ongoing. We have not sought more funds."

Ajay Singh, Jewargi MLA and chairman, Kalyana Karnataka Region Development Board, said the region has spent a record Rs 4,059 crore of the Rs 5,000 crore budget allocated this year. This, he said, contrasts with the finance department's claim that the region has not used its allocated funds. "This year, we will use the entire funds for the region," Singh said.

To ensure adequate water supply this year, the RDPR department has directed all zilla panchayat chief executive officers to hold mandatory review meetings with panchayat development officers on the second and fourth Mondays for the next three months to assess ground-level realities.

Also, district authorities will conduct press briefings on the second and fourth Tuesdays to keep people informed of action taken. Officials have also been directed to physically inspect drinking water sources in rural areas. Measures have been outlined to prevent contamination, including ensuring proper drainage around borewells, preventing wastewater stagnation, and constructing protective concrete platforms around water sources.

"The govt has issued clear directions to prevent drinking water shortages in rural areas," Priyank Kharge, RDPR minister, said recently. "District officials must closely monitor the situation and take necessary action."

Video of Israeli tourist's ₹6L payout sparks online outrage

Sangamesh.Menasinakai
@timesofindia.com

A Feb 16 road accident in Sanapur near Hampi — the day the court delivered its verdict in the Hampi gang rape and murder case involving an Israeli survivor — has surfaced more than a month later after a video of a compensation payout went viral on social media.

Shantakumar, 28, a masonry supervisor, was allegedly hit by an Israeli tourist while speeding on a two-wheeler, his brother N Vijay told **TOI**.

HAMPI ACCIDENT

"He suffered serious leg injuries, lost a lot of blood and had to be moved to a private hospital in Ballari," Vijay said. Doctors diagnosed a fracture and advised plastic surgery costing about Rs 11 lakh, he added.

Vijay said the family was initially dissuaded from going public given the sensitive timing of the accident. "We were told it could hurt Hampi's image as an international tourist destination," he said.

However, the situation got a bit tricky for Shantakumar and his family when the Ballari hospital insisted on a police complaint before conducting the surgery. On returning to Sanapur on Feb 18, some persons claiming to represent the Israeli tourist offered Rs 6 lakh as compenation. "We accepted it due to the medical emergency," Vijay said.

The issue came to light only after a video of the payout surfaced online, triggering backlash on social media that the family had defamed Hampi and India by accepting cash from a foreigner to hush up the incident.

When the family approached Gangavathi Rural police, Vijay said they were asked by the cops why they were filing a complaint even after accepting compensation? "After hours of discussion, the case was finally registered," Vijay said, adding that Shantakumar remains hospitalised and may take two more months to walk.

Vijay said the family is considering legal action against those "misrepresenting facts" on social media. Koppal SP Ram L Arasiddi, meanwhile, termed the incident a "minor accident", confirming that a case was registered on Feb 18.

Sympathy factor improves governing party's chances

ManuAiyappa.Kanathanda
@timesofindia.com

Bengaluru: As campaigning intensifies for the April 9 byelections to Davanagere South and Bagalkot assembly seats, electoral data and political assessments indicate a structural advantage for the governing party, shaped by historical voting patterns, lower turnout, organisational strength and a likely sympathy factor.

Davanagere South has remained a Congress stronghold, with the party winning since 2008. In 2023, it secured a 58% vote share and a margin of 27,888 votes. Analysts say such entrenched voting behaviour offers a clear baseline advantage in bypolls, where large swings are uncommon.

Statewide trends reinforce this. While the 2023 assembly polls recorded a turnout of 73.1%, participation in bypolls typically drops to 50%–55%, especially in urban areas. Lower turnout reduces the influence of swing voters and increases the importance of cadre-driven mobilisation.

"Historical voting patterns matter more in bypolls than in general elections," said MN Patil, psephologist. "When a constituency has a consistent preference, the governing party has a clear head start."

TOI

PROMISES TO KEEP: R Ashoka releases BJP's manifesto in Davanagere South

Over the past decade, bypolls have largely favoured parties helming the govt. In 2019, governing BJP won 12 of 15 seats, while in 2024, governing Congress won all three bypoll constituencies.

Both Davanagere South and Bagalkot bypolls were necessitated by deaths of sitting MLAs — Shamanur Shivashankarappa and MY Meti. Analysts say such situations often generate a sympathy wave that can prove decisive. "Also, continuity tends to consolidate votes around the governing party. Opposition parties have limited time to counter that narrative," said some Congress members.

Bagalkot is viewed as relatively more competitive, but observers say recent developments still tilt the contest towards the incumbent. However, turnout dynamics remain central to the contest.

"In a full-scale election, swing voters play a larger role," said Karthik G, an election data analyst. "In bypolls, it is about who brings their voters to the booth. The governing party, with greater resources and an active organisational network, is better equipped for that task."

Micro-level mobilisation is, therefore, crucial, especially in Davanagere South, which has an electorate of around 2.2 lakh voters with distinct community blocs. "Breaking a long-standing voting pattern is significantly harder in a bypoll than in a general election," said political commentator Vishwas Shetty. "The governing party benefits from both legacy support and administrative visibility."

But Shetty said outcomes can still be shaped by local factors. "Caste alignments, opposition candidate popularity and micro-level issues can sometimes overturn expected results," Shetty said.

SHORT TAKES

MLA: Must I lick boots?

Yeshwantpur MLA ST Somashekar, who was expelled from BJP, wrote to former CM BS Yediyurappa, asking whether he was expected to "lick his boots" or those of his son and party state president BY Vijayendra. He was referring to a remark by M Rudresh, who is being projected as BJP's candidate for Yeshwantpur in the next election. "Rudresh asked me whose shoes I am going to lick? Should people willing to join BJP lick boots? Is there such a culture in BJP?" he asked.

BJP releases manifesto

BJP released its manifesto for the Davanagere South bypoll, promising improvements in connectivity, drinking water supply, drainage systems, sanitation, urban management and education. After unveiling the document, opposition leader R Ashoka alleged Congress ignored expectations of giving a ticket to a grassroots worker, overlooking backward classes, Dalits and minorities. "Minorities are angered as Muslims were not accommodated," he said. He urged voters to support BJP, saying a victory would ensure development.

Cong hits out at Centre over price rise

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Bengaluru: With a fresh round of price revisions set to take effect, deputy chief minister DK Shivakumar and AICC general secretary Randeep Singh Surjewala Tuesday stepped up criticism of the Centre, alleging inflation was placing an increasing burden on households.

The duo said prices of some 900 essential medicines, including those used for diabetes, hypertension and infections, would rise from Wednesday, the start of a new financial year. Questioning annual revisions and tax policies, they alleged cost escalations in healthcare would directly affect patients.

TOI

POLL SEASON STAPLE: Randeep Singh Surjewala at a press conference in Bengaluru

Targeting the Ujjwala scheme, Shivakumar said it had become a "firewood stove scheme", citing rising LPG costs. He said domestic cylinder prices climbed to Rs 913, with shortages pushing costs higher in some areas.

Surjewala and Shivakumar also pointed to broader inflationary trends across sectors. They cited increases in construction inputs such as steel, cement, bitumen and petrochemical products like polyethylene and PVC. Cement prices were expected to rise by Rs 50–Rs 100 per bag, they said, adding that such increases would impact housing and infrastructure.

On transport, they said airfares had risen by 10-15% due to fuel surcharges, while road toll charges were set to increase by about 5% from April 1. Surjewala alleged toll collections were a "highway robbery". He said since 2019-20, Rs 23,000 crore was collected in Karnataka alone. He also cited the Bengaluru–Mysuru highway, alleging that toll was collected before project completion. They also flagged increases in postal charges, stating that Speed Post rates had risen by 34%.

Shivakumar alleged the Centre's policy decisions and its approach to global factors had led to higher costs across essential services. He contrasted this with the state govt's welfare programmes, stating that its guarantee schemes were providing financial support to households facing inflationary pressure.

Melukote temple first preference for shooting

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Mysuru: When it comes to film or serial or even advertisement shooting, Sri Cheluvanarayana Swamy Temple in Melukote, Mandya district, is the first preference of film directors. The scenic beauty of the temple area, especially the iconic kalyani, continues to attract film crew.

According to details shared by state endowment minister Ramalinga Reddy to a question raised by Mysuru-Mandya MLC Madhu G Madegowda, Rs 16,000 is charged per day for Kannada films and Rs 20,000 per day for non-Kannada film shooting at the temple. A sum of Rs 5,000 is charged for serials and commercials.

As per data shared by the minister, till now Rs 12.3 lakh has been collected under this head in the temple. In the last three years (between 2022-23 and 2024-2), Rs 9.2 lakh was collected as the permission fee.

During 2023-24, nine films and two serials were shot, earning a revenue of Rs 2.4 lakh. During 2024-25, four serials and films were shot, generating a revenue of Rs 2 lakh.

According to the data, the next popular temple in the region for shooting is Sri Kashi Vishwanatha temple, Gosai ghat, Srirangapatna. It earned a revenue of Rs 2.4 lakh. With Rs 75,000 revenue, Nimishamba temple in Srirangapatna is in third position.

In his reply, Reddy informed that the revenue generated is used for temple development, and there is no proposal to increase fee.

Dharmik Parishad: Group C temples lack proper mgmt

▶ Continued from page 1

The muzrai department has undertaken an exercise to identify govt temples and land attached to them, with the focus being on Group C temples. Of 34,566 notified temples in the state, nearly 90% fall under Group C, with each earning less than Rs 5 lakh annually on an average. A vision group that met last week discussed ways to enhance income while preserving and popularising these temples.

A detailed report is being prepared for expert review. Muzrai officials said the model may attract devotees who have migrated from their native villages and are willing to contribute to the upkeep of local temples.

Rajender Kataria, vice-chairman of Dharmik Parishad, said smaller temples have long lacked structured management despite their widespread presence. "Group A and B temples have their own income and committees, but Group C temples lack proper management," he said, adding there are no clear adoption guidelines for these temples.

TIMES TRIBUTE
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"Those we love don't go away,
They walk beside us every day,
Unseen, unheard, but always near,
Still loved, still missed and very dear"

Shri. Naresh Jayantilal Shah
08-10-1956 to 01-04-2021
Remembered by
Jayantilal Nagardas Shah,
Varsha Naresh Shah
Fenny - Saumil, Punit - Nirali,
Jarvinya, Natasha, Vihana
Shah Family

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VAIKUNTA SAMARADHANE

DOB : 12.12.1950
DOD : 22.03.2026

Sri Jodidar H. Jayaramaiah
(S/o. Late Smt. Lakshmamma & Late Sri Jodidar Hanumanthappa)
Former National Kabaddi Player, General Secretary - Karnataka National Athletics and Karnataka Masters Athletics Association (R)
With deep grief and sorrow to inform the passing away on 22-03-2026, Sunday, **VAIKUNTA SAMARADHANE** will be performed on **01-04-2026, Wednesday, 12-00 noon,** you are requested to attend the Ceremony and pray for the departed soul.
Venue : "Lakshmi Nilaya", No. 458/7, 'F' Block, Opp. Axis Bank, Sahakaranagar, B'lore - 92.
-: Deeply Mourned by:-
Smt. B. R. Venkatalakshmamma, Jodidar Harish & Kruthi Harish Jodidar
Late Kavitha & Raveesh, Deepa & Suhas, Deethya, Charvi, Karunya & Jodidar Family
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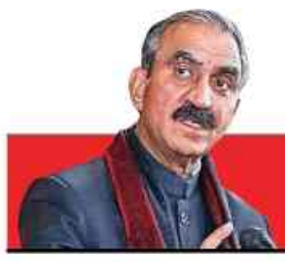


AMID PROTESTS FROM NEIGHBOURING HARYANA AND PUNJAB, HIMACHAL ROLLS BACK ENTRY TAX HIKE

KERALA CHIEF MINISTER PINARAYI VIJAYAN FLAGS CONCERNS OVER FCRA AMENDMENT BILL, SLAMS CENTRE

HACK OF THE DAY — **CHECK IF A COMPANY IS REAL BEFORE PAYING**

WHAT IT SOLVES: Helps you verify whether a company or LLP actually exists and is active before paying deposits, fees, advances, or joining charges

WHAT TO DO: Use the MCA master data search to check the legal status of a company before trusting it with money or documents

STEPS:

1. **Visit** the MCA master data search page
2. **Enter** the company or LLP name you want to verify
3. **Check** the legal name, CIN or LLPIN, and current status shown in the records
4. **Match** the details against the name used in emails, websites, invoices, or offer letters
5. **Avoid** sending money if the details do not match or the status looks suspicious

NOTE: Registration alone does not prove trustworthiness, but it is a useful first filter against fake employers, vendors, and advance-fee scams

SCAN FOR MORE

Hacks are based on verified public sources. Readers are advised to follow official websites & updated rules

9-year-old girl dies after getting entangled in swing in Maharashtra

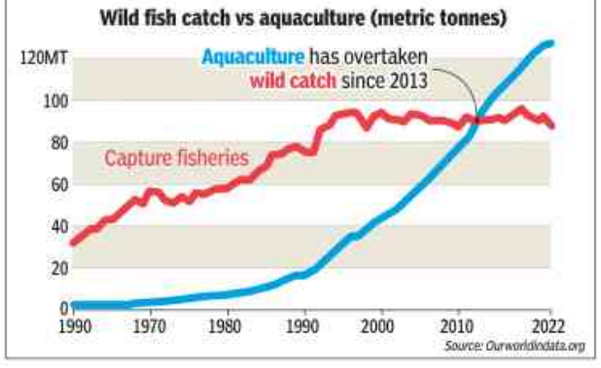
A nine-year-old girl died after the rope of a swing tightened around her neck while she was playing at home at the taluka place of Majalgaon in Beed district, at around 10.30am on Tuesday. The victim, Vrinda Rudrawar, a Class 2 student, was playing on the upper floor of the house with her four-year-old sister when the accident occurred. "The school was off on the occasion of Mahavir Jayanti. While playing, Vrinda climbed onto a chair to reach the swing. However, the chair tipped over, causing the nine-year-old to lose her balance, and the swing's rope somehow got wrapped around her neck and tightened," one of the uncles of the victim said, requesting anonymity. TNN

STATISTICS A slice of life in numbers

Most of seafood isn't coming from the sea anymore

Like chicken and eggs, which are now almost entirely farm-produced, more than half of the world's seafood today comes from farms — called aquaculture. This has helped ease pressure on wild fish stocks

Wild fish catch vs aquaculture (metric tonnes)



Census officials must be allowed entry into homes

'They Will Paint Census Number On House As Per Law'

Bharti.Jain@timesofindia.com

In case an enumerator fails to cover one's household during the field operations, such person may contact the charge officer

New Delhi: All residents of the country are obligated by the Census Act to allow the census staff entry to their houses during field operations and also let them paint the census number on the house.

The census number painted on houses in India is a unique identifier assigned during houselisting operations (HLO) to map every housing structure, ensure complete coverage and avoid double-counting of households. It is to be written prominently — with a permanent marker pen or equivalent — on the doorway of the census house or adjacent to it.

The size of the number should be such that it can easily be seen from a distance of two metres, states the HLO manual for Census 2027.

Each respondent is required by the Census Act to furnish correct information to the enumerator "to the best of his/her knowledge or belief". Given that Section 15 of the Act requires all individual data to be kept confidential and not shared with any govt agency, under Right to Information (RTI) or produced as evidence in the courts, respondents usually provide correct information to the census officials, enabling accuracy of aggregate data released at the level of various administrative units like village, town, district, state etc.

However, there exists a punitive provision in the Census Act to deal with those who do not provide correct information or refuse to cooperate with the census officials. Under Section 11(1)(d) of Census Act, any person who refuses to answer to the best of his knowledge or belief, any question asked of him by the census officer, commits an offence for which a fine extending to Rs 1,000 may be imposed. In case an enumerator fails to cover one's household during the field operations, such person may contact the charge officer — who is generally the block development officer (BDO), municipal secretary or ward officer of the area. Alternatively, even the district collector or district magistrate of the relevant district or the town commissioner may be informed. They will initiate the corrective steps.

As per frequently asked questions (FAQs) listed on the census portal, preliminary data for census 2027 shall be released within a few months of completion of the exercise. The release of the more detailed tables and reports will follow in phases.

BMC gets its first woman chief in over 160 years

Chaitanya Marpakwar & Richa Pinto | TNN

Ashwini Bhide is recognised for spearheading major infra projects such as the underground metro

Mumbai: Ashwini Bhide, who played a key role in the construction of the underground metro in Mumbai, was appointed the city's municipal commissioner on Tuesday, becoming the first woman to head the over-160-year-old BMC.

Bhide, an IAS officer of the 1995 batch, retires in 2030 and could get a full three-year tenure as BMC chief. She took charge from outgoing commissioner Bhushan Gagrani on Tuesday.

Along with mayor Ritu Tawde and leader of the opposition in the house Kishori Pednekar, Bhide forms a triumvirate of women at the apex of BMC's administration.

"I thank Maharashtra govt for entrusting me with this responsibility. I would like to congratulate Bhushan Gagrani on his successful tenure," said Bhide, who will continue to hold additional charge as MD of Mumbai Metro Rail Corporation.

Bhide is recognised for spearheading major infrastructure projects such as the underground metro. As additional municipal commissioner, she played a crucial role in implementing the Mumbai Coastal Road project as well. She is known as a task master and said to be close to chief minister Devendra Fadnavis — she was posted as additional chief secretary in the CMO.

A meeting between Fadnavis and deputy chief minister Eknath Shinde on Monday night at the chief minister's official residence in Mumbai is believed to have focused on pending transfers of senior IAS officers. Fadnavis is said to have backed Bhide's candidature.

Ashwini Bhide will be overseeing a budget of Rs 80,000 crore. "I've spent four crucial years in BMC, including during the Covid pandemic. This institution carries immense heritage even as it continuously reinvents itself. As I take the reins, I look forward to navigating challenges with my team and building on the work of my predecessors to the best of our abilities," she said.

Women dominate Mumbai's civic power structure

The BMC administration is witnessing an unprecedented moment of women-led leadership, with the appointment of Ashwini Bhide, **reports Richa Pinto.** The newly elected civic body — barely two months old — already has women occupying most of its key positions: Mayor Ritu Tawde (BJP corporator from Ghatkopar), opposition leader and Sena UBT corporator Kishori Pednekar, and chairpersons of the improvement and education committees, Sandhya Doshi and Rajeshree Shirwadkar. The municipal secretary's post is also held by a woman — Manjiri Deshpande. Welcoming Bhide's appointment, Tawde called it a "matter of immense pride" for Mumbai.

X: Order on blocking a/cs 'disproportionate'

New Delhi: X Corp has informed Delhi high court that it has asked the central govt to reconsider its March 18 directive to block 12 accounts, stating that the order is "disproportionate", **reports Abhinav Garg.**

The Centre cited use of deep fakes and spreading of "false narratives" as the reason for its recent crackdown on social media content. One of the affected accounts is Dr Nimo Yadav, operated by Prateek Sharma, who moved the high court seeking access to the blocking order. In response, X submitted before Justice Purushaindra K Kaurav that it is taking steps in connection with the blocking orders, and has already written to Ministry of Electronics & Information Technology (MeitY), arguing that a majority of the content in each of the X accounts do not violate Section 69A of the IT Act-2000, the provision cited by govt in its blocking order. Among other accounts affected by the blocking order are Bhavika Kapoor, Ashok Swain, @Nher_who, @ActivistSandeep, @mrjethwani_, @indian_armada, @Doc_RGM and @DuckKiBaat.

In an affidavit, X has given the specific case of Nimo Yadav, disclosing that the Centre has acted against the parody account for "spreading false narratives involving the PM" and "portraying him in bad taste".

The social media giant also flagged a violation of natural justice, noting no account holders were given a hearing before their accounts were blocked.

Social media news to come under IT Rules

New Delhi: The Centre has moved to extend its digital media rules to news and current affairs content shared by non-publisher users on social media platforms, proposing changes that expand the reach of Part III of the Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021, beyond registered publishers.

In draft amendments issued on March 30, the ministry of electronics and information technology (MeitY) has invited stakeholder comments till April 14, signalling a move to strengthen compliance requirements for intermediaries and expand oversight of online content. A key proposal seeks to make it clear that Part III of the Rules—currently applicable to digital news publishers—will also apply to "news and current affairs content" shared on social media by users who are not registered publishers. This effectively brings such content under the same code of ethics framework.

While the draft itself focuses on clarifying applicability and strengthening oversight mechanisms, govt officials indicated that the framework could enable action on such content through the existing grievance redressal process overseen by the Inter departmental committee, though the draft does not spell out specific actions.

It proposes changes under Part II, including insertion of a new Rule 3(4), which requires intermediaries to follow govt-issued advisories, directives and guidelines as part of their legal responsibilities under Section 79 of the IT Act. TNN

86% in India report workplace disruptions, above global levels

Manash.Gohain
@timesofindia.com

iStock

Globally, 67% of workers reported at least one major workplace disruption; 89% Indians are actively building new skills to stay relevant

New Delhi: India's workforce is facing a sharper disruption than the rest of the world's — but is also adapting faster, with 86% reporting major workplace changes in the past year, far above global levels, and 89% actively building new skills to stay relevant.

Exclusively accessed by **TOI**, the 2026 Human Progress Report by ETS (Educational Testing Service), a global non-profit that designs assessments like TOEFL and GRE and tracks workforce readiness trends, flags a defining shift. Job security is no longer about tenure, but adaptability. As AI reshapes work and roles evolve rapidly, Indian workers are leaning heavily into continuous learning and skill validation to stay competitive. The scale of the churn is striking. Globally, 67% of workers reported at least one major workplace disruption, but India is among the hardest hit markets. Nearly 98% of workers here report facing at least one barrier to professional success, underscoring the pressure to constantly upskill.

Yet, India also stands out for resilience. The country recorded a Human Progress Index score of 114.4, significantly above the global average of 96.7, reflecting stronger perceived access to education and upward mobility. The report shows Indian workers are not just reacting— they are actively future-proofing. Nearly nine in ten say they are developing new skills, while 90% believe verified credentials are essential as skill demands shift.

"In the face of a changing job landscape, workers are quickly adapting," said Amit Sevak, CEO of ETS. "Four in five workers are building new skills, even though most can't envision their future job. Adaptability is becoming the new 'must have' skill."

A key driver of this shift is artificial intelligence. Indian workers estimate that over 42% of their tasks involve AI tools, higher than the global average, and 78% say they use AI primarily to remain competitive, not by choice.

Globally, the report points to a widening skills gap. Workers face a 19-point gap between the importance of AI skills and actual proficiency, the largest among all competencies. At the same time, 88% expect employers to support upskilling, but only 71% get it. Globally, 61% fear their jobs could be disrupted, and 58% report anxiety about becoming obsolete, a phenomenon the report terms "FOBO" — fear of becoming obsolete.

Another structural gap is emerging around access to credentials. While 73% of workers globally want skill credentials, only 45% have access, pointing to affordability and availability barriers.

Cyclist lies bleeding on road for 2 hours after hit & run, dies

Gurgaon: A 52-year-old cyclist who suffered critical head injuries in a hit and run was found by his family lying bleeding by the roadside nearly two hours later, by when they had searched multiple hospitals to find out where he had been taken.

Radheshyam Gupta was hit around 5.30pm on Monday while cycling home. He died early on Tuesday. The family alleged they came to know about the accident when Gupta's wife called him as the family was preparing to leave for a religious gathering. Instead, another man answered the call. "He said he had found the phone on the road and that my brother had met with an accident," said Ghanshyam, Gupta's brother.

He said people near the accident spot told the family that the person who hit Gupta had taken him for treatment. But when relatives began looking for Gupta, they could not find him anywhere. As the search widened, family members split up. Around 7.30pm, Gupta's wife and another relative found him lying injured. TNN

Shielded people from hike as global crude prices rose, says PM

Tushar.Prabhune
@timesofindia.com

Ahmedabad/Palanpur: As the intensifying war in West Asia roils global energy markets and disrupts supply chains, PM **Narendra Modi** on Tuesday said "govt shielded people in India" by not hiking fuel prices while simultaneously displaying stability and progress in the face of turmoil.

On a one-day visit to Gujarat, Modi also claimed Congress was orchestrating a conspiracy to reap political gains from the global upheaval.

He stressed that it was "extremely important" for a democratic country like India to take the lead to ensure global development in the face of supply chain disruptions and geo-political conflict. He emphasised that govt was laying a strong foundation for technology and energy security.

"Congress cannot reconcile itself to this (not hiking fuel prices) and so its netas are relentlessly spreading rum-ours to create an atmosphere of fear. They want people to queue up... and they can fuel a misinformation campaign," Modi said, likening Congress to "political vultures" in his speech.

Recalling the shirtless protest by Congress's youth wing members at the Global AI Summit, Modi said the party's intention was clearly to malign India's image.

"We should feel proud that when many countries are struggling to protect themselves from the impact of war, India is not only maintaining stability but progressing rapidly," he said. Earlier, in Sanand near Ahmedabad, Modi said, "Global supply chains, be it chips, rare earth minerals or energy, have been badly affected by conflicts. These are intrinsically linked to the accelerated progress of humanity, and any disruptions in these supply chains impact the development of the entire human race," he said.

Describing this as India's "Techade", the PM said the current period was not just about economic competition but about shaping the future tech landscape.

Tanker carrying Iranian oil may reach India soon

New Delhi: A foreign vessel carrying Iranian oil is likely to reach India on April 4, marking the first such shipment since May 2019, when India stopped imports from the country in the wake of US sanctions, report **Atul Mathur & Dipak Dash**. Marine Traffic data showed that the Eswatini-flagged tanker, Ping Shun, was heading to Vadinar facility of Deendayal Port at Kandla. An official said the port had not received any intimation about its arrival till late on Tuesday.

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BJP to expel illegals using law that Nehru 'opposed'

BJP's Manifesto For Assam Carries 31 Promises

▶Continued from page 1

The manifesto carries 31 promises; under one named "Surakshita Asom", it states, "Our double-engine government is committed to protecting Assam's civilisational identity by securing indigenous land and heritage..."

The party promised to implement the act "to expedite the process of detection and pushback of illegal immigrants".

The act of 1950 was short-lived; it was halted just two days after it was implemented in the state after then Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru wrote to then CM Gopinath Bordoloi, directing him to halt all action under this law. Nehru stressed that safeguarding minorities and restoring peace were the immediate priorities, warning that continuing expulsions would only deepen tensions.

The current BJP-led state govt started using the act last year after the Supreme Court confirmed that it was still valid. This law is an independent instrument to push back infiltrators without going through the tedious legal process involving foreigners' tribunals and other courts.

The state cabinet's SOP for DCs and SSPs states that if a person is suspected to be an illegal immigrant, the DC will give that person 10 days to produce proof of citizenship. If the person fails, the DC can issue an expulsion order under Sec 2 of the act, giving 24 hours for removal by a specified route. Foreign nationals identified by Foreigners' Tribunals will be expelled directly.

ANI

Union minister Nirmala Sitharaman and Assam CM Himanta Biswa Sarma release the party's manifesto, in Guwahati

The manifesto also promises to introduce a uniform civil code (UCC) — excluding

BATTLEGROUND ASSAM

Sixth Schedule areas and tribals — and to formulate laws against what it termed as "love jihad" and "land jihad". BJP also promised land rights for indigenous citizens and vowed to safeguard Assam's spiritual and cultural institutions.

Pitching Assam as India's "Eastern Gateway", BJP promised Rs 5 lakh crore investment to boost connectivity — developing Gati Shakti cargo terminals, 10 mini logistics parks, an air cargo hub at Guwahati, and river logistics hubs at Bogibeel, Pandu and Jogighopa. The party pledged to harness inland waterways under Maritime India Vision 2030 to expand trade and regional links.

A Rs 18,000 crore Badh Mukt Assam Mission was announced to make the state flood-free through embankment rebuilding, riverbank stabilisation and dredging of National Waterway 2.

Employment and education featured prominently, with two lakh govt jobs, startup support, financial aid up to Rs 5 lakh for 10 lakh youths, free education from KG to PG for poor families, 70,000 new teachers, and an "Education City" with global tie-ups.

Women's empowerment promises included raising Orunodoi aid to Rs 3,000, creating 40 lakh "Lakhpati Baideos" under Mahila Udyamita Abhijan, and women-run community canteens. Farmers were promised subsidies for tractors and tillers, MSP top-ups, and support for dairy and fisheries.

Tea garden families were assured of land pattas, housing, and wage hikes. The manifesto pledged constitutional status for tribal councils and inclusion of six communities in the ST and OBC lists.

Rejig sees appointment of 12 secys, 27 addl secys

▶Continued from page 1

Chanchal Kumar, currently in the department of north-east region, moves to I&B ministry immediately, swapping places with Sanjay Jaju. Tuesday's order included the appointment of 12 secretaries and 27 additional secretary level officers.

Rohit Kansal, an AGMUT cadre officer of 1995 batch, has been appointed the new rural development secretary. Tourism secretary Srivatsa Krishna will be the new minority affairs secretary, while UIDAI chief executive Bhuvnesh Kumar will take charge as tourism secretary.

Nagaland-cadre IAS officer Abhishek Singh, who has been promoted to secretary rank, will take over as director general of National Testing Agency.

Nivedita Shukla Verma, a 1991-batch IAS officer, who is currently secretary, chemicals and petrochemicals, will take charge as secretary, department of administrative reforms and public grievances. Punjab-cadre IAS officer Tejveer Singh will be the new chemical and petrochemicals secretary.

Narendra Bhooshan, a UP-cadre officer, was named the new secretary of land resources department. The present minority affairs secretary, Chandra Sekhar Kumar, has been made CEO, National Rainfed Area Authority.

K'taka HC refuses to stall probe into ex-dir of trading company over data theft claims

Vasantha.Kumar @timesofindia.com

Bengaluru: The Karnataka high court refused to interfere with the investigation into data theft allegations against a former director of Plutus Research Private Limited, a company engaged in quantitative trading. Justice M Nagaprasanna dismissed Aashay Harlalka's petition challenging the crime registered against him.

The judge also negated the petitioner's argument that, as a founder-director and equal shareholder, he could not be accused of stealing data. The judge observed that shareholding did not confer ownership over the entirety of a company's data.

The petitioner, along with two others, founded the company, which was registered in Ahmedabad, Gujarat, and had its corporate office in Bengaluru. The petitioner became a shareholder and director in March 2018 and was terminated on March 24, 2025. The company made proprietary algorithms to trade in Indian stock markets.

The complainant, Saurabh Bhola, one of the directors, alleged that the petitioner was stealing data or bringing disrepute to the company through those acts of stealing data. The complaint stated that he was intentionally and unauthorisedly altering the parameters of trading models, causing significant financial loss to the company.

The petitioner challenged the crime registered against him for offences under BNS sections 316 and 318 (4) and sections 65 and 66 of the Information Technology (IT) Act.

However, Justice Nagaprasanna negated the argument put forth by the petitioner that the data in question belonged to him.

The judge also cited the judgment in the Bacha F Guzdar case, in which the Supreme Court held that the company, as a juristic entity, stood distinct from its shareholders and it alone was the owner of the property.

Panel accepted Adani's bid as it offered faster payments

▶Continued from page 1

Vedanta also offered an equity infusion of Rs 400 crore into Jaypee. Thereafter, on Nov 8, 2025, Vedanta submitted an addendum via email, offering to raise the upfront cash payout to Rs 6,563 crore and equity infusion to Rs 800 crore while keeping the overall bid value at Rs 12,505.9 crore.

The committee of creditors (CoC) accepted Adani's bid because it offered around Rs 6,000 crore upfront cash payment and faster payments for the remaining amount within two years, compared to Vedanta's longer payment timeline of up to five years.

According to sources, Vedanta, in its petition before the Supreme Court, has alleged that lenders acted "arbitrarily" while rejecting its bid to acquire Jaiprakash Associates Ltd (JAL) and also questioned the role of the resolution professional in the ongoing insolvency process.

Vedanta Ltd has also mentioned that the National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT) erred in appreciating that the commercial wisdom of lenders is not 'absolute' and therefore, the same can be set aside in cases of 'arbitrariness, perverseness or capricious exercise' of power.

In Nov last year, CoC of JAL, which went into insolvency in June 2024, approved the Rs 14,535-crore resolution plan of Adani Enterprises Ltd to acquire the debt-ridden Jaypee Group's flagship firm that has a presence in many sectors, including cement, hospitality, power and real estate, among others. The grand total of Vedanta's bid was Rs 17,926.21 crore, which included a Rs 1,200-crore payment towards settlement for sports city dues.

Earlier this month, NCLT approved the Adani bid. Vedanta moved the appellate tribunal NCLAT, which declined to stay the implementation of Adani's bid. Then, Vedanta moved SC.

Single-blow death in sudden domestic row not murder: HC

Ashish.Mehta@timesofindia.com

Jaipur: Rajasthan high court at Jodhpur ruled that death caused by a single blow during a sudden domestic quarrel does not amount to murder, and altered the conviction of an accused from culpable homicide under IPC Section 304 Part I to Section 304 Part II, while retaining the sentence of seven years' rigorous imprisonment.

The case arose on July 23, 2005, in Chittorgarh district where Kiran, the wife of the accused, was found injured at her parents' home and later died during treatment. The prosecution case rested mainly on the statement of the couple's minor child, who said his father struck his mother on the head with a spade.

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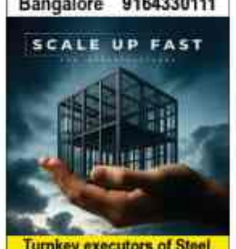

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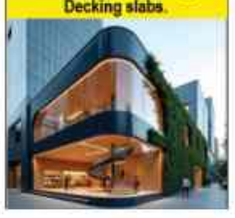

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real estate

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tender & notices

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THE GENERAL PUBLIC IS HEREBY INFORMED THAT GROWTHLIFT INVESTMENT ADVISORIES PVT LTD, A SEBI REGISTERED INVESTMENT ADVISER IS GOING TO SURRENDER ITS SEBI REGISTRATION NO. INA200014283 and BSE IA ENLISTMENT NO. 1615 AND THAT IF ANYONE HAS ANY GRIEVANCES, THEY CAN LODGE THE GRIEVANCES AT SCORES.SEBI.GOV.IN WITHIN 15 DAYS OF THE DATE OF NOTICE. DATE: 01-04-2026 PLACE: BANGALORE

THE TIMES OF INDIA
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personal

CHANGE OF NAME

CHANGE IN NAME I, Girish Gopalkrishna Pai, S/o. Gopalkrishna Laxman Pai @ Girish Gopal Krishna Pai, S/o. Gopalkrishna Laxman Pai @ Girish Gopalakrishna Pai, S/o. Gopalkrishna Pai @ Girish Gopalakrishna Pai, S/o. Gopala Krishna Pai @ Girisha Gopalkrishna Pai, S/o. Gopalkrishna Laxman Pai @ Girisha Gopal Krishna Pai, S/o. Gopalkrishna Laxman Pai @ Girisha Gopalakrishna Pai, S/o. Gopalakrishna Pai @ Girisha Gopalakrishna Pai, S/o. Gopala Krishna Pai @ Girish G. Pai, S/o. Gopalkrishna Laxman Pai @ Girish G. Pai, S/o. Gopalkrishna Laxman Pai @ Girish G. Pai, S/o. Gopalakrishna Pai @ Girish G. Pai, S/o. Gopalakrishna Pai @ Girish G. Pai, S/o. Gopalkrishna Pai @ Girish G. Pai, S/o. Gopala Krishna Pai, resident of No. 40 "GEETHGOPAL", 3rd Cross, Vinayaka Nagar, Annasandra Palya, Vimanapura, Bengaluru North, Bengaluru – 560 017 to GIRISH GOPALKRISHNA PAI, S/o. GOPALKRISHNA PAI, Via Affidavit No. 202, page No. 42, Volume No.1, dated 28-03-2025 sworn before Notary, P. Anuradha, Bengaluru. Henceforth, I shall be known as GIRISH GOPALKRISHNA PAI, S/o. GOPALKRISHNA PAI for all future purposes. Sd/- GIRISH GOPALKRISHNA PAI, S/o. LATE GOPALKRISHNA PAI.

CHANGE OF NAME I, Sarojamma w/o Gangaram Rao H.N, d/o Annoji Rao, aged about 76 Years, residing at 3rd Cross, Prashant Nagar, Gauribidanur Town, Kasaba Hobli, Chikkaballapur Dist 561208, have changed my name from 'Sarojamma' to 'Saroja Bai' vide affidavit dated 23-03-2026 sworn to before advocate and notary public, Sri. H.M. Adi Narayana Gowda (Reg no 20458/20), Gauribidanur.

I, Sharanayya S/O Shambulingayya, R/o No. G09, B-Block, Ground Floor, JS Carnation, NRI Layout, Kalkere Main Road, Horamavu, Bengaluru, Karnataka-560043, have changed my name to Sharanayya Hiremath.

I, Heena Tarun Jain , W/o Tarun Kuamr B Jain, residing at 30,Tilawat Enclave, S.B Road, V.V Puram, Blr -04, have changed my name from Heena T Tilawat / Heena T via affidavit dated 30/03/2026 as sworn before Notary.

I, Tanuj Kumar, Residing At Ocean Heights, Plot No 10, Ganpati Smart City, Sirsa, Haryana, 125055 Have Changed My Name To Tanuj Khatter Vide Affidavit Dated 24-03-2026

I Waqar Ahmad Siddiqi S/o Late Khalil Ahmad Siddiqi, aged about 52 years, R/at Flat No. 207, IV Heritage Estate, Doddaballapur Main Road, Near Ramanashree California Resort, Yelahanka - 560 064, I have changed my Minor Daughter Maira Siddiqi's name as FATIMAH ZAHRA SIDDIQI vide affidavit dated 14-01-2026, sworn before Advocate & Notary, LEELA, Bengaluru.

I, KRISH RAKESH KANSARA, R/o No. 17, Shashu Enclave, B1, First Floor, 1st Cross, 1st Main Road, Patel Marappa Layout, S.G Palya, CV Raman Nagar Post, Bengaluru- 560093, have changed my name from KRISH KANSARA to KRISH RAKESH KANSARA, vide affidavit dt: 28.03.2026 sworn before notary A.R Muneer Ahmed, Bangalore

I Tenkasi hariharakrishnan anantham (given name) Anantham Krishnan(surname) residing at 203 bhavana residency horamavu Bengaluru would like to change my name to Anantham Krishnan vide affidavit notarized by notary Chandrasekhar(law 48 LCL2021).

I, Pavana N (DOB: 22-05-2006), R/o HSR Layout, Bengaluru-560102, have changed my name to Pavankumar N w.e.f. 26-11-2025.

I, RUCHI TIWARI , daughter of BALKRISHNA TIWARI , residing at #26-27 Flat 302 Sharanya Enclave 9th Cross Main Road Kaggadasapura Bengaluru-560093, have changed my name to RUCHI RAI henceforth.

I, K L Sridevi W/O D N Shiva Kumar R/O Vajjanakurike Post, Koratagere Taluk, Duddanahalli, Dist. Tumkur (Karnataka) - 572129 have changed the name of my minor daughter D S Manogna aged 13 years and she shall hereafter be known as AYANSI RITHAANYA.

LOST & FOUND

I, Vani.K.S have Lost My Original Sale deed documents Situated in "Zuzuvadi Village of Hosur Taluk, Krishnagiri Dist., Doc No - 7676/2010, (GPA Doc No - 1289/2012) Sy No - 727, SRO Hosur, While Some Personal Work Near Masthi (Malur Taluk) Via Berigai, Case Registered No. 2126005/2026. Sakala No. P0012S260000894, Aff No-IN-KA20871726991741Y, Finder Please Contact or Return to This Address, Vani.K.S Res/No. 101/410, Ramya Elite, 4th Main Road, Near Medplus Madical Shop, OMBR Layout, Banaswadi, B'lore, Phone-8095559828.

personal

LOST & FOUND

LOST OF DOCUMENT
Notice is hereby given that the original documents of a property owned by CALSOFT PRIVATE LIMITED (Bangalore Office), including Registered Sale Deed bearing Document No. 8225/2021-22 dated 30 March 2022, along with Property Search Report, HDFC Bank NOC, Parking Allotment Letter, and Sanction Plan, have been lost/misplaced.
If found by anyone or if any person has any claim/objection, please contact on the below-mentioned number WITHIN 7 DAYS from publication of this notice.
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William Walsh is expected to join IndiGo by Aug 3

▶ Continued from page 1

Choosing a pilot-turned-management heavyweight with CEO experience shows that his focus will be equally on operations and expansion to ensure what happened last Dec never recurs. Willie, as Walsh is popularly known as, will complete his tenure at IATA on July 31, 2026, and is expected to join IndiGo by Aug 3.

A mail sent by Rahul Bhatia to employees to inform them of Wille's appointment on Tuesday was signed off as 'kuchh hee dino kaa mehmaan' as CEO. And the one sent on March 10 to announce Elbers' resignation was signed as "main hoon na".

On his appointment, Bhatia said: "As we enter a new phase of transformation and growth, I am delighted to welcome Willie to IndiGo. He is an iconic and accomplished aviation leader and brings a rare combination of global perspective, operational expertise of having built strong customer-focused airlines, deep industry experience and a values-driven leadership, making him exceptionally suited to lead IndiGo at this pivotal cusp of growth."

Walsh said: "I am delighted to have the opportunity to lead IndiGo. The airline has a strong foundation, a compelling vision and an exceptional reputation. What stands out most to me are its people, their passion, professionalism and commitment. The aviation landscape is evolving rapidly, and IndiGo is extremely well-positioned to be at the forefront of this change. I look forward to partnering with colleagues across the organisation to build a culture of excellence, innovation, collaboration and sustainable value for all stakeholders." The airline says Walsh will be "responsible for the overall management and strategic direction of the airline with a focus on transformational initiatives to strengthen the operational performance, advance the company's network and commercial strategy while enhancing customer experience".

PM announces ₹2L each in ex gratia for families of deceased

▶ Continued from page 1

Officials said at least five of the injured were hospitalised in a critical condition. Sheetla Mata temple near Maghra village receives a crowd of devotees every Tuesday but this one was larger than usual, which the administration probably failed to anticipate, sources said. Mantu Singh, a resident, said hundreds of devotees from Nalanda and its adjoining districts turned up for early darshan, triggering a scramble that went out of control as the crowd swelled beyond what the temple premises could hold. When some in the crowd broke queues, the victims got trapped in the resultant chaos, he said.

PM Narendra Modi termed the stampede "deeply painful" and announced Rs 2 lakh each in ex gratia for the families of the deceased and Rs 50,000 to each of the injured. Outgoing CM Nitish Kumar condoled the deaths and sanctioned Rs 6 lakh each for the kin of the dead.

HC: Woman sole owner of 'streedhan', can't face criminal charges for taking it away

Prayagraj: A woman is the sole owner of her 'streedhan' (personal wealth), and a legally wedded wife cannot face criminal trial for taking it away, Allahabad high court has ruled, **reports Rajesh Kumar Pandey**. Allowing a petition filed by Anamika Tiwari, Justice Chawan Prakash, in his judgment dated March 16, quashed the summoning order and criminal case filed against her and her relatives on her husband's complaint. The petitioner was booked under IPC section 406 for breach of trust. The HC, however, observed that properties given to a woman during her marriage constitute her 'streedhan', and do not become joint property of husband and wife. A wife has all rights to dispose of this property at her own pleasure, Justice Prakash said.

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E-mail: info@investup.org.in | W: https://invest.up.gov.in/

ADVT No.: 680/Admin/IUP/2025-26 Dated: 31 March, 2026

Applications are invited in prescribed format from eligible & experienced candidates for the following posts. Applications will be accepted on Invest UP's website: www.invest.up.gov.in/career/.

Sr. No.	Name of Post	No. of Post
1	General Manager (Infrastructure)	01
2	Asst. General Manager (Infrastructure)	01
3	Asst. General Manager (EV)	01

➢ For details of educational/technical qualification, age, eligibility, experience, application format etc. kindly visit Invest UP website https://invest.up.gov.in/career/
➢ Only online applications shall be accepted for the above posts
➢ Last date for the submission of online applications is 22.04.2026 by 5:00 PM
Scan here to apply for Above mentioned Posts
Chief Executive Officer, Invest UP

**GOVERNMENT OF PUNJAB
DEPARTMENT OF POWER
(Energy Branch)**

Applications are invited for the post of Director/Generation, Punjab State Power Corporation Limited
For details, login to www.punjab.gov.in, www.pspcl.in, www.pstcl.org and www.pserc.gov.in. Last date of receipt of applications is 30-04-2026 upto 5:00 PM.
C 443/26, DPR/Pb.:1079/12/2025-26/10062

TOURISM CORPORATION OF GUJARAT LIMITED (TCGL)
(A Government of Gujarat undertaking)
Udyog Bhavan, Block No. 16, 4th Floor,
Sector-11, Gandhinagar-382 011
Website: https://www.gujarattourism.com

TENDER NOTICE

Bids are invited from reputed and experienced operators for "Operation of River Cruise from Statue of Unity to Hafeshwar, Gujarat".
The project requirements, technical specifications, eligibility criteria, selection process, etc. are included in the Tender documents, which shall be available for download from the websites: https://tender.nprocure.com/ and https://www.gujarattourism.com from 06/04/2026 onwards.
The last date for submission of the Technical and Financial Bid (online only) is 27/04/2026 up to 6:00 pm. and Technical Bid (physical only) is 29/04/2026 up to 4:00 pm.
Managing Director

BANK NOTE PAPER MILL INDIA PRIVATE LIMITED
(A Joint Venture of SPMCIL-A Govt. of India Enterprise and BRBNMPL-A subsidiary of Reserve Bank of India)

TENDER NOTICE 01.04.2026

Bids are invited from eligible firms for the following items for Bank Note Paper Mill India Pvt Ltd, Mysuru

S.N.	TENDER No.	Brief Description	Qty
1	BNPM/GTE/568/2025-26	SUPPLY OF POLYURETHANE DISPERSION (PUD) WITH CROSSLINKER CHEMICAL FOR CWBN PAPER AT BNPM, MSYURU (KARNATAKA) AND SPM, NARMADAPURAM (M.P)	4000MT & 160MT

For details and downloading of the document, please visit our website www.bnpmindia.com. Addendum/corrigendum/clarifications, if any, shall be displayed only on the website.

INDIAN INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY KHARAGPUR
invites applications for admission to the Two-year MBA - Executive (MBA-Ex) Program for working professionals, Batch of 2026-2028
Synchronous Classes on Saturdays & Sundays

The MBA-Ex program offered by Vinod Gupta School of Management, IIT Kharagpur, is a two-year Master's degree program aimed at grooming working professionals for leadership and managerial roles. The program will be delivered in **hybrid mode via synchronous classes on Saturdays and Sundays and campus in-person immersion every alternate term.**

Course Delivery: Synchronous classes on weekends and four in-person campus immersions.
Mode of Admission: Written Test followed by Personal Interview across five centers.
Admission of reserved-category candidates will be done as per Government of India notification.

Last Date for Submission of Online Applications: June 10, 2026

Details about eligibility criteria, application fee and mode of application are available at **https://som.iitkgp.ac.in/executive-mba.php.**
Please follow this link for updates.
For any queries, please contact: **executivemba@vgsom.iitkgp.ac.in**
Tel: 03222-282295/282297.

Corporate Insolvency Resolution Process of Jaiprakash Associates Limited

The resolution plan of Jaiprakash Associates Limited **("Company")** marks a significant milestone in the resolution of the Company's affairs and the preservation of its value as a going concern.

The Corporate Insolvency Resolution Process **("CIRP")** was conducted in strict compliance with the provisions of the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code, 2016 **("Code")** and the IBBI (Insolvency Resolution Process for Corporate Persons) Regulations, 2016. From the outset, the Resolution Professional **("RP")** remained committed to ensuring that the process was conducted with the highest standards of transparency, fairness, and integrity. The Request for Resolution Plans was issued in accordance with applicable law, and all prospective Resolution Applicants **("RAs")** were provided with complete and equal access to information necessary to formulate their resolution plans.

Basis the terms and conditions of the Request for Resolution Plan **("RFRP")** and the challenge process, all resolution plans received along with the financial proposals finalized basis the challenge process, were put up for evaluation in accordance with an evaluation matrix that had been published as part of the RFRP and made available to all RAs prior to the submission of their resolution plans. The evaluation was conducted by an independent third-party expert appointed by the Committee of Creditors **("CoC")** to ensure objectivity and rigour in the scoring process. The results of the evaluation were subsequently presented to, discussed with, and deliberated upon by CoC in a thorough and consultative manner.

Following detailed deliberation, the CoC, exercising its commercial wisdom, approved the resolution plan that best served the interests of all stakeholders such as public sector banks and financial institutions, homebuyers, employees and workmen, operational creditors etc. The approved resolution plan was thereafter placed before the Hon'ble NCLT, which, upon being satisfied that the plan met the requirements of the Code, granted its approval. The approval by the NCLT represents the culmination of a process that has been conducted with diligence, professionalism, and an unwavering commitment to the objectives of the Code.

The CIRP of Jaiprakash Associates Limited stands as a testament to the effectiveness of the insolvency resolution framework envisaged under the Code. Throughout the process, the RP ensured that the core objectives of the Code remained at the forefront, namely the maximisation of value of the assets of the Company, the protection and balancing of the interests of all stakeholders including financial creditors, homebuyers, operational creditors, and employees, and the conduct of a resolution process that was transparent, equitable, and fair.

The RP expresses gratitude to the members of the CoC, the Hon'ble NCLT, all Resolution Applicants, and the various professionals and advisors who contributed to the successful outcome of the CIRP.

Sd/-
Bhuvan Madan
Erstwhile Resolution Professional, Jaiprakash Associates Limited
Registered Address: A-103 Ashok Vihar, Phase-3 (Behind Laxmi Bai College), New Delhi - 110052
Email: madan.bhuvan@gmail.com

PUBLIC NOTICE

We are undertaking a title investigation on the immovable property more fully described in the 'Schedule' hereto and hereinafter referred to as **'Schedule Property'.** The said title due diligence is being conducted for and on behalf of our Client who is desirous of entering into certain transaction in relation to the Schedule Property. Mr. Krishnappa (son of Mr. Munivenkatappa) **('Owner')** has represented to our Client that he is the absolute Owner of the Schedule Property and has unrestricted rights of alienation over the same.

Notice is hereby given to the general public that any person/s other than the present Owner, asserting any right, title, charge, lien, claim/s or any interest whatsoever in respect of the Schedule Property are hereby called upon to submit to the undersigned, their claim/s, if any, over the Schedule Property or submit their objections, if any, to the aforementioned transaction. The said claim/s or objections must be in writing, together with documentary proof to support such claim/s or objections and must be delivered to us at the address given below within a period of 7 (Seven) days from the date of publication of this Notice. If no such claim/s or objections are received, it shall be deemed that no one else other than the Owner has/have any right, title, interest or claim whatsoever in respect of the Schedule Property and our Client would be at liberty to proceed with the said transaction in connection with the Schedule Property.

SCHEDULE
(Description of the Schedule Property)

All that piece and parcel of the agricultural land bearing Survey No. 57/2 measuring 26 ½ Guntas situated at Chikkatirupati Village, Lakkuru Hobli, Malur Taluk, Kolar district and bounded as follows:

East by : Land in Survey No. 57/3;
West by : Land in Survey No. 57/1;
North by : Land in Survey No. 58; and
South by : Land in Survey No. 56.

Sd/- Date: 01.04.2026
Mr. Srinivas B.R., Partner Place: Bengaluru
DSK Legal,
Prestige Loka, No. 201, 2nd Floor, No. 7/1 & 7/7, Brunton Road, Bengaluru – 560025.
Tel: 080-69548770

Directorate General of Shipping, Mumbai

VACANCY NOTICE

Applications are invited for the contractual position for the post Chief Executive Officer in the Maritime Training Trust under Directorate General of Shipping, Govt of India, 9th Floor, Beta Building, I-Think Techno Campus, Kanjurmarg (East), Mumbai-400042. The eligibility, education qualifications, work experience and format for submission of application etc may be seen in the detailed advertisement placed at the DG Shipping Website: www.dgshipping.gov.in / https://dgma.gov.in. The last date for receipt of application is 30 days from the publication of this advertisement. The application form along with the attachments may be submitted through email on ttc-dgs@nic.in / singh.deependra@gov.in.

S. No.	Post Name	No. of Post	Mode of Appointment	Tenure
1	Chief Executive Officer	1	Through Interview	Initially for two years. (as per ToR)

The Corrigendum/Addendum, if any, will be uploaded on the DGS Website only.

Sd/-
(Deependra Singh Bisen)
Deputy Director General of Shipping (MTT)

गृह मंत्रालय भारत सरकार

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7. Keep the SE ID safe
8. Provide the SE ID to the enumerator when they visit
9. The enumerator will confirm the information

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All your information will remain completely confidential and secure

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Self-Enumeration 1st – 15th April
Houselisting 16th April - 15th May

Dadra & Nagar Haveli and Daman & Diu

Self-Enumeration 5th – 19th April
Houselisting 20th April - 19th May

CBC 19108/13/0012/2526

LET US FULFILL OUR RESPONSIBILITY AND PARTICIPATE IN THE CENSUS

CensusIndia2027

Man assaulted, forced to chant religious slogans in UP

Meerut: Rishabh Thakur, a prime accused in the infamous "Bareilly cafe assault case", has been arrested by city police for allegedly assaulting a 21-year-old man from a minority community in front of his 'friend', and forcing him to publicly chant religious slogans. Thakur, a 'zila badar' (criminal expelled from district), "misbehaved" with the young couple on Saturday evening as they belonged to different faiths, police said Tuesday, **reports Sandeep Rai**.

In Dec last year, Thakur had disrupted a nursing student's birthday party at a city cafe and assaulted her two male friends over allegations of 'love jihad', sparking public outrage.

The latest incident was filmed by Thakur's associates and circulated online. In the purported clip, they could be seen thrashing the young man with slippers and forcing him to chant slogans.

Chandigarh, Delhi are biggest consumers of domestic LPG

Govt Pro-Rated Data From April '25-26 For Annual Average

Atul.Mathur@timesofindia.com

New Delhi: Chandigarh and Delhi have emerged as the biggest consumers of domestic liquefied petroleum gas (LPG/cooking gas), with annual consumption in both cities significantly higher than the national average.

As per data shared by the petroleum ministry in Parliament, beneficiaries of Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana (PMUY) in the national capital consumed 7.4 cylinders in 2025-26, while those in Chandigarh used 7.2 cylinders, against the national average of 4.8. Among non-PMUY consumers, usage was even higher. Households in Chandigarh consumed nearly 9.6 cylinders in FY26, while those in Delhi used 9.2 cylinders.

3.1 lakh piped gas connections activated in March, 2.7L installed: Govt

New Delhi: Govt on Tuesday said that 3.1 lakh piped gas connections were activated in March, while another 2.7 lakh were installed during the month as part of efforts to expand the PNG network across the country. Govt made concerted efforts last month to activate dormant PNG connections and convert LPG users to piped gas consumers after imported LPG supplies were disrupted due to the military conflict in West Asia. "During the month of March, more than 3.1 lakh connections, including domestic, commercial, hostel, mess and canteen have been gasified. In addition, more than 2.7 lakh new connections have been given and are being gasified," the petroleum ministry said in a statement. TNN

The national average for non-PMUY consumers in the just-ended fiscal year was 6.8 cylinders. The govt pro-rated LPG consumption data from April 2025-Jan 2026 to estimate the annual average.

Other states where LPG consumption exceeded the national average include Haryana, Uttarakhand, Punjab, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Gujarat and Karnataka, along with UTs such as Puducherry and Andaman and Nicobar Islands. In contrast, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Assam, Madhya Pradesh and several Northeastern states reported consumption well below the national average.

Based on consumption patterns across PMUY and non-PMUY households, govt recently revised the minimum gap between delivery of a cylinder and booking of a refill to 25 days in urban areas and 45 days in rural areas.

The move came amid pressure on energy imports due to the ongoing conflict in West Asia, a key supplier of crude oil and gas.

India meets 60% of its LPG requirement through imports, and 90% of it comes from West Asia. India has over 31 crore LPG consumers, including 10.6 crore PMUY beneficiaries.

Launched in May 2016, the scheme aims at providing deposit-free LPG connections to adult women from poor households. Beneficiaries currently receive a subsidy of Rs 300 per cylinder, for up to 12 refills, credited directly to their bank accounts.

In a written reply to an unstarred question in Rajya Sabha, MoS for petroleum Suresh Gopi said the govt released Rs 31,246 crore towards PMUY subsidy and Rs 6,348 crore under direct benefit transfer for LPG between 2020-21 and 2024-25. Higher consumption of LPG could also add to the govt's subsidy burden if global prices remain elevated amid the ongoing conflict.

11 cadres had returned to mainstream in six days: SP

▶ Continued from page 1

Bijapur police reported the surrender of 25 cadres, including members of area committees, alongside confiscation of automatic weapons such as AK-47 rifles. In Sukma, two women carrying rewards of Rs 8 lakh each surrendered. Forces also seized Rs 10 lakh cash and multiple rifles. SP Kiran Chavan said the district's Maoist network had been "nearly dismantled".

Kanker saw two surrenders with an AK-47 rifle. SP Nikhil Rakhecha said 11 cadres had returned to mainstream in six days, though about 14 Maoists, including divisional committee-level members Chander and Rupi, were still active.

About nine lower-rung cadres are still believed to be active in Kandhamal forests. "They may either be neutralised or arrested," ADG (anti-Naxal operations) Sanjeeb Panda said, crediting the state's rehabilitation policy and coordinated operations.

INDIA DIGEST

Cochin Shipyard hands over anti-sub warfare watercraft Malwan to Navy

In a significant boost to India's coastal defence capabilities, Cochin Shipyard Ltd (CSL) on Tuesday delivered to the Indian Navy 'Malwan', the second of eight anti-submarine warfare shallow watercraft (ASW SWC) being constructed by it. "The delivery marks a pivotal step in strengthening the nation's maritime security framework through indigenous innovation," CSL said in a statement. The vessel draws its name from the historic coastal town of Malwan in Maharashtra, a region deeply rooted in the maritime heritage of Maratha ruler Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj. CSL designed and constructed Malwan in accordance with the Navy's specifications and DNV classification rules. Nearly 80m in length with a displacement of 1,100 tonnes, Malwan boasts a high-agility waterjet propulsion for superior manoeuvrability in shallow waters. The anti-submarine is equipped with torpedoes and multifunctional anti-submarine rockets.

BOOST TO MARITIME SECURITY

Sessions court judge upholds right to promote religion

Emphasising on constitutional freedom to promote one's religion and religious thoughts, a sessions court has set aside a magistrate's order dismissing a 64-year-old woman's complaint that she was assaulted by a mob while sharing Biblical messages with a group in a Mumbai suburb. The sessions judge held that the lower court wrongly relied on a police inquiry report without allowing Eunice Joseph to lead evidence or examine witnesses. The judge said the Constitution allows every person the "freedom to promote his religion and religious thoughts."

Cleric apologises for remarks against UP CM's mother

A cleric from Bihar, who was arrested Monday night for his allegedly derogatory remarks against Yogi Adityanath's mother, has tendered an apology in a video statement, seeking forgiveness from the UP chief minister. Maulana Abdullah Salim was arrested from Purnea by UP STF and brought on transit remand to Bahraich, where he was produced before a court on Tuesday and sent to 14-day judicial remand.

Bengal bizman held in interstate investment fraud

Bengal businessman Pawan Ruia was arrested Tuesday in connection with a large, organised interstate investment fraud racket. The cybercrime wing of Bengal Police made the arrest shortly after Calcutta high court vacated a previous order that granted protection to Ruia and his family members from coercive action in two pending criminal cases.

₹75 crore sanctioned for Shivaji museum in Agra

The UP govt has sanctioned Rs 75 crore for the Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Museum in Agra, with tourism and culture minister Jayveer Singh saying the project will soon emerge as a "major cultural attraction". The digital museum is being built at the site where the erstwhile Maratha ruler was once held captive by Mughal emperor Aurangzeb, and will feature advanced installations and a premium gallery for visitors.

Above-normal night temps likely during April-June

▶ Continued from page 1

Heatwave is considered if a weather station records 40 degrees Celsius or more in plains and 30 degrees Celsius or more in hilly regions, and the temperature is at least 4.5 degrees above normal. Many areas in the plains normally get three to five days of heatwave during the April-June period.

The parts of the country that may get below normal temperatures during the day are, however, likely to have warmer nights. "During the season (April-June), above-normal minimum (night) temperatures are likely over most parts of the country except some regions of Maharashtra and Telangana where normal to below normal minimum temperatures are likely," said Mohapatra.

Though the IMD chief preferred not to say anything about the monsoon season at this juncture, the latest forecast from the Monsoon Mission Climate Forecast System (MMCFS) suggested that El Niño–Southern Oscillation (ENSO) neutral conditions are most likely to continue during April to June. "Thereafter, the probability of development of El Niño conditions increases gradually," said IMD —an indication that its adverse impact on rainfall may hit the latter part of the monsoon season during Aug-Sept. IMD is expected to come out with its first-stage forecast on this year's monsoon rainfall sometime around mid-April.

IMD data showed as many as 45 human deaths due to extreme weather events across many states in March. Lightning caused the highest (32) deaths in Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Jharkhand, Haryana, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Assam, Chhattisgarh and Kerala. Speaking about March weather, Mohapatra said eight western disturbances (WDs) impacted India during the month, against a normal of five to six. Six WDs impacted northwest India during March 11-31, causing light to moderate rains with thunderstorms, lightning, gusty winds and hailstorm over northwest & adjoining central parts of the country.

The large-scale thunderstorm activity occurred in many parts of the country mainly during the second half of the month and it led to reduction in maximum temperatures over most parts of India.

Teacher runs 11km home to mark her retirement

Kochi: In a refreshing departure from tradition, a retiring teacher in Kochi chose to mark the end of her career with a marathon run instead of the customary ceremonial send-off. Shiny Benny, 56, a Malayalam teacher at St Teresa's HSS, Ernakulam, and a member of the runners' group 'Souls of Kochi', ran an 11km stretch from the school to her residence in Nettoor.

Shiny Benny ran from school to her home in Nettoor on Tuesday

The run began at 4.30pm on Tuesday and was flagged off by mayor V K Minimol. She was joined by 24 fellow runners, including her husband, Benny. Speaking to TOI, Shiny said it was a member of the runners' group who suggested marking her retirement with a run home. TNN

Study warns of glacial outburst risk from five Kashmir lakes: Omar

Srinagar: Five lakes in Kashmir Valley have high susceptibility to glacial lake outburst floods, posing a threat to 2,704 buildings, 15 major bridges, road stretches and a hydropower plant in their immediate downstream areas, a study by University of Kashmir has found, **reports Naseer Ganai**.

Citing the study, CM Omar Abdullah, who also holds the disaster management and relief portfolio, told the J&K Assembly Tuesday that there is a need for continuous monitoring of these high-susceptibility lakes through remote sensing and targeted field assessments, along with the installation of effective early warning systems.

However, the CM said, a lake classified as highly susceptible does not mean it is currently unstable. He said it only means it may be more prone to an outburst compared to others if specific triggering conditions occur. "This does not imply that the lake is currently unstable or actively breaching or likely to fail in the immediate future," Omar said in his written response.

The study, conducted by researchers from the department of geoinformatics, has analysed 155 glacial lakes in the Kashmir Himalaya. Using this facility, he said, in-depth surveys of high-risk glacial lakes in western Himalaya are planned for 2026.

ಕರ್ನಾಟಕ ಸರ್ಕಾರ GOVERNMENT OF KARNATAKA

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DIRECTOR: 8147796529 PRINCIPAL :8147796527

CAO:8147796526PA : 8147796539.

e-mail-ids:directorbmcrballari@gmail.com, website : https://bmcrballari.karnataka.gov.inprincipalbmcrballari@gmail.com

No. BMCRC/SUP/TEND/DIALYSIS/06/2025-26/Call-3 DATE:26.03.2026

Re e-TENDER NOTIFICATION

Tenderis invited from theeligible Bidders for Supply of Dialysis Itemsto Medical College Hospital, BMCRC, Ballarion Rate Contract for a period of One yearunder Two bid system through e-procurement portal https://kppp.karnataka.gov.inof Government of Karnataka as per the KTPP Act-1999-2000. The interested Bidders are informed to submit the proposal in priscribed format in above said e-portal on are before 10.04.2026 @5.00PM. The total approximate cost of tender is Rs.198.31Lakhs Further details may be obtained in the above said website and www.bmcrballari.karnataka.gov.in.

Sd/- Dean & Director, BMCRC, Ballari

DIPR/Ballari/1197/KSMCA/2025-26

महिला अभियान्त्रिकी महाविद्यालय, अजमेर

(बीकानेर तकनीकी विश्वविद्यालय, बीकानेर का संघटक महाविद्यालय)

Established in the year of 2007 by Government of Rajasthan

WOMEN ENGINEERING COLLEGE, AJMER

(A CONSTITUENT COLLEGE OF BIKANER TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY, BIKANER)

Nasirabad Road, Makhupura, Ajmer - 305002 website: www.gweca.ac.in

email: principal@gweca.ac.in Ph. No.: 0145-2695535

No: MECA/Procurement/2025-26/3475 Date: 28.03.2026

निविदा सूचना: MECA/2025-26

महिला अभियांत्रिकी महाविद्यालय अजमेर परिसर में स्थित छात्रावासों के मैस (भोजन व्यवस्था) एवं महाविद्यालय के विभिन्न कार्यों के संचालन हेतु जन शक्ति (Man Power) एवं सुरक्षाकर्मी (Security Guard) हेतु निविदा दाताओं (Competent Bidders) से निविदायें आमंत्रित की जाती है। सम्बंधित कार्य/ सेवा की अनुमानित लागत, निविदा डाउनलोड एवं प्रस्तुत करने की दिनांक, शर्तें एव अन्य आवश्यक सम्पूर्ण विवरण राज्य सरकार की उपापन वेबसाइट www.eproc.rajasthan.gov.in, www.sppp.rajasthan.gov.in, तथा महाविद्यालय की वेबसाइट www.gweca.ac.in पर देखी जा सकती है।

क्र स	कार्य	अनुमानित लागत (रुपये में)	NIB No.	UBN No.	TENDER ID
1	महाविद्यालय परिसर स्थित मैसों (भोजन व्यवस्था) हेतु निविदा कार्य/सेवा	1.25 करोड़	WEA2526 A0024	WEA2526 SLOB00022	2026_GWEC_ 548497_1
2	Supply of Manpower Services (Campus & Hostel)	85 लाख	WEA2526 A0025	WEA2526 SLOB00023	2026_GWEC_ 548774_1
3	Supply of Manpower Services (Campus Security)	20 लाख	WEA2526 A0026	WEA2526 SLOB00024	2026_GWEC_ 548801_1

प्राचार्य, महिला अभियांत्रिकी महाविद्यालय अजमेर

BENGALURU CENTRAL CITY CORPORATION

Office of the Executive Engineer, Shanthinagara Division, 9th Floor, PUB, Bengaluru-560 001.

No:EE/SN/TEND/26/2025-26 Date: 31.03.2026

INVITATION FOR TENDER (IFT)

(Two Cover System) (Through GOK KPPP only)

website: https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in

The Executive Engineer, (Shanthinagara Division), BCCC Bengaluru, invites bids for the following services from reputed contractors for Annual Maintenance of SWD and Aterial and Sub Arterial Roads in Shanthinagara Division for the works detailed in the table below.

Sl. No.	Name of the Work
1.	Annual Maintenance of Storm Water Drain in Shanthinagara Constituency (For 3 Years). **Project Cost (₹ in Lakhs) 535.00, (EMD in ₹): 8,02,500/-**
2.	Annual Maintenance of Aterial and Sub Arterial Roads including Footpath in Shanthinagara Division. **Project Cost (₹ in Lakhs) 116.10, (EMD in ₹): 2,00,000/-**

Calendar of Events: (1) Pre bid meeting will be held on **07.04.2026 at 3:30 p.m.** in the Office of the Chief Engineer, Central Zone-1, BCCC, 18th Floor, Public Utility Building, Bengaluru-560001. **(2)** Last Date for submission of tender documents on or before **13.04.2026 at 4:00 p.m. (3)** Technical Bids will be opened on **15.04.2026 at 11:00 a.m.**

Sd/- Executive Engineer, Shanthinagara Division, BCCC.

HUBLI ELECTRICITY SUPPLY COMPANY LIMITED

(Wholly Owned by Govt. of Karnataka)

Corporate Office, Vidyut Bhavan, Gopanakkoppa

Hubli-580 023. Phone : (0836) 2223877 Fax : (0836) 2324307

E-Mail : seepmc.hescom@gmail.com Web Site : www.hescom.co.in

Corporate Identity Number (CIN) : U31401KA2002SGC030437

No: HESCOM/SEE(PMC)/EE-P1/AEE-1/2025-26/cys-13045 Date : 27-03-2026

TENDER NOTIFICATION (Through K.P.P.P. Portal Only)

Superintending Engineer (Ele). Projects Monitoring Cell. Corporate Office, HESCOM, Hubballi invites the below said tenders in HESCOM jurisdiction.

Sl.No.	Particulars	Bid indent No for Others
1	Providing additional 5 MVA, 33/11KV power transformer at various 33/11KV sub-stations in HESCOM jurisdiction (5 MVA Power Transformer & Others materials will be supplied by departmentally) on Partial Turnkey basis.	HESCOM/2025-26/EL/ WORK_INDENT 1099, 1100, 1101, 1102, 1103, 1104, 1105, 1106, 1107, 1108, 1109 & 1110 (12 packages)
2	Replacement of existing 2 X 5MVA by 2 X 8 MVA Power Transformers at 33/11 KV Sub-station Dalekurdri in 33KV S&L Belagavi Division & Dratkal in 33KV S&L Division, Karwar on Total Turnkey basis	HESCOM/2025-26/EL/ WORK_INDENT 1111 & 1112 (2 packages)
3	Construction of S/C 33KV lines from various 110/33/11 KV substations to existing 33/11KV sub-stations in HESCOM jurisdiction on Total Turnkey basis.	HESCOM/2025-26/EL/ WORK_INDENT 1113, 1114 & 1115 (3 packages)

The detailed notification regarding the bid enquiry can be obtained by logging in to the website www.kppp.karnataka.gov.in on or after 5 PM of 31.03.2026.

Sd/- Superintending Engineer, (Ele), Project Monitoring Cell, HESCOM, Hubli

DIPR/DHARWAD/KSMCA/1408/2025-26

TENDER NOTICE

Directorate of Museums,

Government of Gujarat, Abhilekhagaar Bhavan, Sector-17, Gandhinagar

RFP NO: 1

The Directorate of Museums, Government of Gujarat is inviting interested Bidders to participate in the bidding process for the **"Selection of Agency for Operation, Maintenance and Management of Cafeteria for Museums of Government of Gujarat".**

Please note that the Tender Documents can be downloaded from the website **https://tender.nprocure.com.** Further the last dale of submission of the Bid (online) is **23/04/2026 by 18:00 hrs.** The last date for submission of Bid in hard copy is **24/04/2026 by 18:00 hrs.** For further details please contact **079-23256730/40.**

RFP NO: 2

The Directorate of Museums, Government of Gujarat is inviting interested Bidders to participate in the bidding process for the '**Selection of Project Management Consultant (PMC) For Supervision, Monitoring, Technical Inputs, Condition Assessment and Review of Operations and Maintenance works being Undertaken at Archaeological Experiential Museum and Tana Riri Museum of Music at Vadnagar'**

Please note that the Tender Documents can he downloaded from the website **https://tender.nprocure.com.** Further the last date of submission of the Bid (online) is **23/04/2026 by 18:00 hrs.** The last date for submission of Bid in hard copy is **24/04/2026 by 18:00 hrs.** For further details please contact **079-23256730/40.**

Director

Directorate of Museums

INF/2936/2025-26

RAJENDRA SINHJI ARMY OFFICERS' INSTITUTE

(HQ K & K Sub Area Officers Mess Annexe)

 # 50 MG Road, Bangalore 560 001

TENDER NOTIFICATION

SEALED TENDERS ARE INVITED FROM REPUTED VENDORS & SUPPLIERS TO SUPPLY DIESEL GENERATOR SET 125 KVA MAKE KIRLOSKAR TO RSAOI BANGALORE. RFP IS AVAILABLE AT

https://rsaoibangalore.in/download/

GUJARAT INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

(A Govt of Gujarat Undertaking)

O/o the Superintending Engineer (SG), Plot No. C5/101, Char Rasta, GIDC,Vapi-396 195.

E-TENDER NOTICE No. 20 of 2025-2026

The tender for the work having cost of **Rs. 660.36 crore** is invited by office of the Superintending Engineer (SG), G.I.D.C., Vapi under jurisdiction of the Executive Engineer, GIDC, Vapi through Tender for online works. The tender for Online work can be upload - download on website **www.nprocure.com**. The detailed tender notice can be seen in GIDC office notice board / GIDC website **www.gidc.gujarat.gov.in**. Right to reject the tender without assigning any reasons thereof are reserved by G.I.D.C., which will be binding to all bidders. Please stay touring web site **www.nprocure.com** for any corrigendum/ addendum / modification till last date of receipt.

Sd/-

Superintending Engineer (SG) G.I.D.C.,Vapi

INF/Valsad/1041/2026

KARNATAKA STATE ROAD SAFETY AUTHORITY

7th Floor, M.S.I.L. House, Cunningham Road, Bengaluru-560052. Phone: 080-22371120. E-Mail: rscdirector@yahoo.in

ಸಂಖ್ಯೆ: ಕರಾರಸುಪ್ರಾ/ವಿವ-36/ಕ್ರಯೋ/ಚ-07/2025-26/493 Date : 27.03.2026

E-Tender Notification

Tender No-TD/2025-26/SE0121

Karnataka State Road Safety Authority Invites tenders through E-Procurement Portal from eligible and registered firms for Providing services of Trained Instructors for LMV Driving Simulators at 25 DCT / RTO / ARTO Office in the State of Karnataka. Interested Firms can obtain details from **www.kppp.karnataka.gov.in**. For any Assistance Contact Helpdesk Nos: 080-46010000, 080-22631200, 080-68948777 and email: support@ eprochelpdesk.com. The Last date and time for submitting Tenders through e-Portal is: 15.04.2026 up to 5.00 PM.

For more information contact Email : **rscdirector@yahoo.in**

Note: Any changes in this notification will not be published in Newspapers. Any further Changes will be updated only on website **www.kppp.karnataka.gov.in.**

Sd/-

Additional Commissioner and Member Secretary

Karnataka State Road Safety Authority, Bengaluru

DIPR/CP/6504/AKAR/2025-26

As part of the expansion of its healthcare operations in the state, **Renai**, a leading conglomerate with an established presence in hospitality and healthcare services, invites

EXPRESSION OF INTEREST (EOI)

Shortlisting of Civil Contractors

from reputed & experienced civil contractors for the construction of a state-of-the-art Super Speciality Hospital along with a Multi-level Car Parking facility at Thrissur, with a total built-up area of approximately 50,000 sq.m.

Project Duration: 30 Months

Interested contractors with proven expertise in executing large-scale institutional infrastructure projects are requested to submit:

• Company Profile • Details of relevant completed & ongoing projects • Financial statements & pre-qualification credentials

Submission Details: EOI submissions should be sent via e-mail on or before **11.04.2026 to: projects@renaimedicity.org** OR **renaimedicitytsr@gmail.com Mob: 9072674706**

Architects:

K.G. Sukumaran & Associates, Kochi-16

For Renai Medicity, Thrissur

CEO & MD

Renai MEDICITY MULTI SUPER SPECIALTY HOSPITAL Palarivattom, Kochi, Kerala

Renai Hospitality & Healthcare

Executive Engineer, Public Works Department, Kolar Division, Kolar-563101

e-mail: eepwdkolar07@gmail.com

website: www.kpwd.gov.in

e-portal: http://kppp.karnataka.gov.in

Phone No. 08152-222022

Short Term Tender notification No: 36/ 2025-26 Dt. 26.03.2026 INVITATION FOR TENDER

On behalf of the Governor of Karnataka, Executive Engineer, Public Works Department has invited **short term tender Notification** to select **Consultancy Services for Preparation of Detailed Project Report (DPR) for construction of four lane bypass road from SH-05 to SH-95 road in Bangarapet town, Bangarpet taluk, Kolar district (PWD/2025-26/SE1100)** The Date and Time for submission of RFP is from 26.03.2026 to 06.04.2026 upto 16.30 hrs. Pre-bid meeting for the above will be held on 30.03.2026 at 11.00am at the Office of The Executive Engineer, PWD Division, Kolar. Further, the applicant has to submit EMD as per KPP Portal The detailed terms and conditions are available in RFP document. More details can be obtained from the office of the under Signed during office hours. Any amendments or modifications in tender notification will be published in Kpp-Portal **(https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in)**

Sd/- Executive Engineer, Public Works Department, Kolar Division, Kolar

DIPR/KOLAR/RO:558/KSMCA/2026-27

ಜಿಲ್ಲಾ ಆರೋಗ್ಯ ಮತ್ತು ಕುಟುಂಬ ಕಲ್ಯಾಣ ಸೊಸೈಟಿ ತುಮಕೂರು

ಜಿಲ್ಲಾ ಯೋಜನಾ ನಿರ್ವಹಣಾ ಘಟಕ, ಎನ್.ಹೆಚ್.ಎಂ. ಜಿಲ್ಲಾ ಆರೋಗ್ಯ ಮತ್ತು ಕ.ಕ. ಅಧಿಕಾರಿಗಳ ಕಚೇರಿ, ತುಮಕೂರು

Email:cpmctumkur@gmail.com, dhotumkur@gmail.com, rchotumkur@gmail.com

ಸಂಖ್ಯೆ: DPMU(T)/NHM/05/2010-11 ದಿನಾಂಕ: 25.03.2026

Tender Schedule

Upliftment of Biomedical Waste Management for Non 24X7, 24X7, FRU, DH CHC, Namma Clinic, T.B Centre, SC-AAM and MCH Facilities through E-Procurement under KSPCBRules.

Particulars: 1. Start Date to submission of tender, Date: **17/03/2026**. 2. Last date for submission of Tender. Date: **16/04/2026**, Evening 4:00 PM, 3. Opening of tender (Technical bid) Date: **17/04/2026**, Evening 4:30 PM 4. Tender Opening Authority DHO Tumkur. 5. BMWM Tender Value & EMD Valure : 8465400/-, 212000/- through E-Procurement.

Note: for more information, contact DPMU Unit, District Health and Family Welfare Office, Tumkur. Mob: 9449843123.

Sd/-District Heath and Family Welfare Office, Tumkur.

DIPR/TUM/523/KSMCA/2025-26

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Employees Just Holding On? Rethink Human Talent In AI Era

By M. Muneer

The talent conversation has shifted from aggressive acquisition to strategic preservation. What looks like "job hugging" is, in fact, a rational survival instinct. Employees aren't just chasing better offers; they're holding on to relevance itself.

With the rise of AI agents joining the workforce alongside human employees, the anxiety quotient has risen even for the most accomplished professionals. In this context, the CHRO has an urgent mandate: recalibrate human talent faster than automation can commoditise it.

Build Careers
The first imperative is to design clear, visible career pathways. The younger cohorts of India are deeply aspirational. They don't leave organisations just for higher pay but for momentum. A CHRO must make it clear to employees what the next rung on the ladder is, and which skills, experiences, and behavioural competencies need improvement.

Expand Roles
In the age of AI, linear ladders are insufficient. Rather than confining individuals to narrow functional silos, organisations must enable portfolio careers—curated rotations, project-based assignments, cross-functional squads, and internal gig platforms. Such exposure deepens institutional understanding, expands individual capability and keeping intellectual curiosity alive. They also make human contribution harder to replicate.

Reinvent Reskilling
India Inc. has invested heavily in digital transformation and must invest with equal seriousness in human transformation. Structured AI literacy programmes should demystify automation rather than provoke fear.

They must also strengthen uniquely human strengths: judgement, ethical reasoning, contextual intelligence, and stakeholder empathy.

Measuring Performance
As for performance, stop counting outputs. In an AI workplace, machines win on volume. Humans must be measured on judgement, creativity, collaboration, and composure amid chaos. Appraisal systems should recognise integrative thinking and ethical discernment—capabilities that anchor trust in increasingly automated environments.

(The author is a start-up investor and co-founder of the non-profit Medici Institute for Innovation)

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TERDAL - 587 315

DGI Principals Hiring

S.N.	Post	Institution	Qualification	Vacancy
1	Principal	Dr. Sidhant Danigond [illegible], Terdal	[illegible] school experience	01
2	Principal	Danigond College of Physiotherapy, Terdal	M.PT., Ph.D with [illegible]	01
3	Principal	Danigond College of Nursing, Terdal	M.Sc Nursing, Ph.D with [illegible] years of experience	01

[illegible]

DHANBAD PUBLIC SCHOOL, HIRAK BRANCH
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Ph No. 9204553538, 9262761111
Affiliated to C.B.S.E. (10+2) Affiliation no 3430242
E-mail: kkmdps@rediffmail.com, Web: www.kkmdps.org

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- Teaching Degree in Education
- Minimum **ten years** of teaching experience of Senior Secondary Classes and **five years** of Administrative experience in CBSE affiliated +2 School.
- Must be proficient in English and possess excellent Communication Skills

Salary as per Seventh Pay Commission with Mediclaim, EPF and Gratuity. Salary is Negotiable.
Send your application in a sealed envelope within 30 days from the date of publication of the advertisement to:
The Secretary, Dhanbad Public School, Hirak Branch, Hirak Road, P.O. Nagnagar, Dhanbad-826004
Secretary

SRI VENKATESWARAA UNIVERSITY
(UGC recognized state private university established under Tamilnadu Private Universities Act, 2019)
Website: www.svuniversity.ac.in

APPLICATIONS ARE INVITED
Eligibility: As per NMC Norms

Professor | Associate Professor
Assistant Professor | Senior Residents

PRE & PARA CLINICAL
Anatomy, Physiology, Biochemistry, Pharmacology, Pathology, Microbiology, Forensic Medicine, Community Medicine

SUPER SPECIALITIES
Cardiology
Neurology
Gastroenterology
Neuro Surgery
Urology

CLINICAL
Emergency Medicine, General Medicine, Psychiatry, Paediatrics, General Surgery Orthopaedics, Radiology, Obstetrics & Gynaecology, Anaesthesiology, Dermatology, Ophthalmology, ENT, Respiratory Medicine

NON-TEACHING
NS/ DNS/ ANS
Central Lab In-charge
Blood bank manager
Medical Records Officer
Pharmacy Manager

Location: Redhills, Chennai (NMC recognised PG Institution), Ettayapuram (New), Tamilnadu
Send resume to chancellor@svuniversity.ac.in
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Smart ambitious graduates, around 35 years, with min 10 years hard core sales experience in B2B premium building products, and having strong connections with Builders and Architects.

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Tracking your health but losing your mind? App burnout is real

Constant alerts, multiple metrics & goals make digital health tracking stressful

Jahnavi@timesofindia.com

For six months, Neha (name changed) was juggling mood trackers, journalling platforms and meditation apps to manage stress. But what began as a support system for the 35-year-old software professional from Delhi soon turned into a burden. Repeated reminders to log emotions and track progress started to feel like a second job. She felt more anxious and "pressured" by every notification sent to optimise her mental health.

"She was trapped in a loop of constant self-analysis," says Gunjan Arya, the Delhi-based counselling psychologist who treated her. "The sheer volume of digital exercises triggered performance anxiety rather than giving her clarity. The very tools designed to help her were fuelling her burnout." Replacing app-based monitoring with simpler, offline habits such as physical activity and direct emotional expression eased Neha's mental fatigue within weeks. But Arya says cases of 'health app burnout' are getting more common by the day, even for those tracking physical health metrics. "When well-being becomes just another checklist, it ceases to be a tool for healing."

Over-tracking, overwhelming

Over the past decade, the digital health-tracking universe has become dense and has led millions in India to track their steps, heart rate, sleep patterns, calories, menstrual cycles and moods through mobile apps. "It's mostly working professionals in the 25-40 age bracket," points out Dr S G Harish, an internal medicine specialist from SPARSH Hospital, Bengaluru. "But with growing awareness about preventive healthcare, many in their 50s and even older adults are warming up to digital health tools." Most use multiple apps simultaneously — one for fitness, one for diet, one for sleep, and separate ones for doctor consultations, he says. And that's where the problem lies.

"With so many health apps, users often experience digital burnout, a sense of burden and cognitive exhaustion from managing multiple disconnected tools," explains Manoj Kumar Sharma, clinical psychology professor and head of SHUT (Service for Healthy Use of Technology) Clinic at NIMHANS, Bengaluru.

Sharma says users are not frustrated by the number of apps alone, but also by the constant effort of logging in, navigating platforms and managing multiple streams of health data. "Fragmented systems force people to switch between apps, creating a cluttered experience that can lead to cognitive exhaustion. When these apps send overlapping alerts, users often face information overload that increases anxiety."

Many apps also offer basic tracking without deeper insight, making users lose interest once the novelty of monitoring fades, say doctors. Though there aren't large studies tracking health app burnout among Indians, a 2020 review by Australian researchers out in the Journal of Medical Internet Research (JMIR) analysed diverse populations to find consistently high dropout rates for health apps, with retention rates falling as low as 4% beyond 15 days of use. Managing so many health apps can also get logistically difficult in India due to poor internet access and shared device usage.

Pressure of numbers

Global research also flags its psychological impact. A systematic review by Newcastle University researchers, published in the Journal of Public Policy & Marketing in 2023, highlighted how fitness apps can lead to stress, reduced motivation and negative emotional responses. A 2022 randomised trial by Stanford scientists found that those who failed to cover desired step count goals tended to eat more unhealthily, had poorer self-esteem and mental health, and an increased blood pressure and heart rate. It was due to a shift from intrinsic motivation — exercising because it feels good — to extrinsic goals set by apps or wearables where users focus on the gamified rewards for closing rings, hitting step counts, or maintaining streaks, rather than paying attention to how their bodies feel.

Constant feedback can also lead people to over-analyse minor changes in data that may not have clinical significance. Dr Sudhakar P, a cardiologist at Narayana Health City, Bengaluru recounts how a patient in his early 40s visited his OPD, worried about an abnormal heart rate history logged in his smart watch. "The device's recorded single lead ECG tracing pointed to sinus tachycardia, a rise in normal heart rate. However, detailed examination including blood work, 12-lead ECG, 2D ECHO and Holter tests ruled out any cardiac issue. He was reassured and there were no further reports of rapid heart rate after that," he says, stressing that even though smart devices are able to pick up subtle heart variations, it's crucial to cross check with doctors to avoid unnecessary panic and misinterpretation of symptoms.

Finding a balance

Digital health tools do have their benefits. "Many apps help patients track memory, cognitive function and sleep quality," says Dr Vishal Chafale, a neurologist at Apollo Hospitals, Navi Mumbai. Some pinpoint migraine triggers, record epilepsy seizure episodes or provide cognitive exercises to support memory and concentration. However, he cautions, "One needs to be careful to choose apps developed by medical professionals or backed by stout research."

Delhi-based cardiologist Dr Samir Kubba says some digital platforms use AI to offer medication reminders or counselling assistance. "It can really help elderly patients living alone, but must be paired with human interaction — doctors, clinicians and trained counsellors. Relying entirely on AI without medical supervision can be risky," he adds.

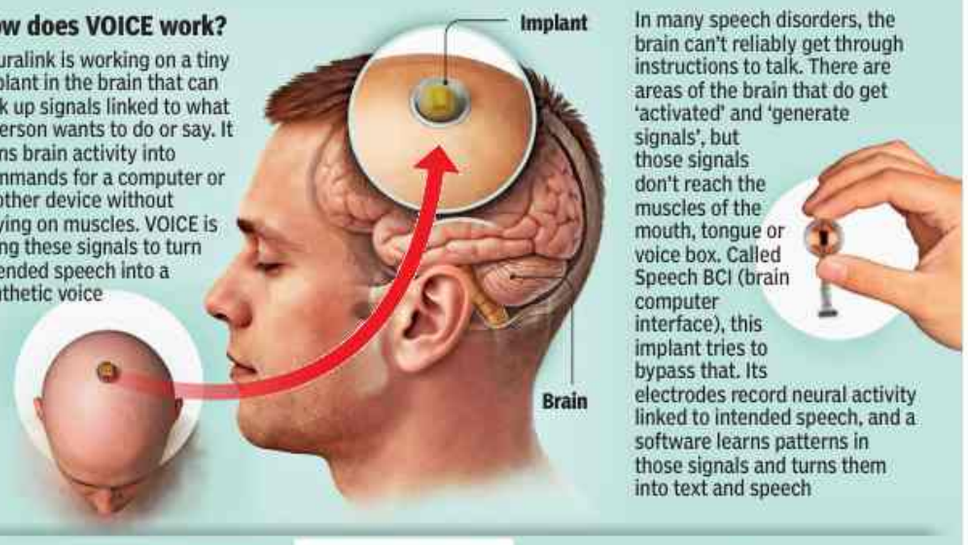
TOI HealthTech

A brain implant that reads thoughts and voices them

ALS, a progressive neurodegenerative disease, was shutting down his ability to speak. But a brain implant has made it possible for Kenneth Shock, a US citizen who lost control over muscle movement, to think about what he wants to say and have a device speak for him. This was possible through an implant, part of the VOICE trial by Elon Musk's company Neuralink. **Chandrima Banerjee** explains

How does VOICE work?

Neuralink is working on a tiny implant in the brain that can pick up signals linked to what a person wants to do or say. It turns brain activity into commands for a computer or another device without relying on muscles. VOICE is using these signals to turn intended speech into a synthetic voice



In many speech disorders, the brain can't reliably get through instructions to talk. There are areas of the brain that do get 'activated' and 'generate signals', but those signals don't reach the muscles of the mouth, tongue or voice box. Called Speech BCI (brain computer interface), this implant tries to bypass that. Its electrodes record neural activity linked to intended speech, and a software learns patterns in those signals and turns them into text and speech

Why it's important

- **160-190** words per minute is how fast people usually talk
- **10** words per minute is what common assistive speech tools can do
- **140** words per minute is what Neuralink is targeting

About 20 lakh people in India live with speech disabilities. Not all of them have complete loss of speech

How long before anyone who needs it can get it?

VOICE is still an early feasibility study, which means it is mainly testing initial safety and function in a small number of people. So, it could take years before anything like this is available outside small trials, and longer before it could reach large numbers of patients

Sources: Nature, New England Journal of Medicine, Neuralink

Who else is doing it?

- While Neuralink had opened its first human trial for brain implants in Sept 2023 and reported its first human implant in 2024, it launched its speech restoration trial in late 2025
- Researchers have been working on BCIs for more than five decades, but speech BCIs have made their biggest leaps only recently
- In 2021, researchers at University of California, San Francisco reported a system that produced about 15 words per minute
- In 2023, a Stanford-led team reached 62 words per minute
- In 2025, researchers at University of California, Berkeley and the University of California, San Francisco reported a system with near-real-time voice streaming

WHICH ONE IS HEALTHIER?

Coconut water		Buttermilk
18-20	CALORIES	40-60
3-4g*	CARBS	4-5g
0.2-0.7g	PROTEIN	3-4g
Nil	FAT	1-2g†

* Natural sugars, † Depends on dilution

Source: **Ishi Khosla**, clinical nutritionist and author, 4G Code to Good Health

Coconut water and buttermilk (chhaas) are both low calorie, hydrating and cooling drinks. Coconut water is rich in electrolytes, especially potassium, and works like a mild IV drip since it is closest to body fluids. It also works well for heat and dehydration. Buttermilk has protein and calcium, and also supports good bacteria in the gut. If the focus is on gut, inflammation and long-term metabolic health, then buttermilk is a better bet. For hydration and recovery, coconut water wins, especially for those who cannot tolerate dairy. Both are best had in the earlier part of the day.

Email your feedback to **toihealth.plus@timesofindia.com** with Health Plus in the subject line. Please mention your name and city

DANCE of DEMOCRACY

Kerala BJP, allies promise AIIMS, 2 free LPG cylinders for poor, high-speed rail

'Time-Bound CBI Probe Into Sabari Heist'

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

TOI

BJP national president Nitin Nabin and state unit president Rajeev Chandrasekhar unveil the party's manifesto for assembly polls

T'puram: BJP-led NDA has come out with a bouquet of promises, from women empowerment to free cooking gas, high-speed rail and AIIMS, if voted to power in Kerala in assembly elections. BJP national president Nitin Nabin released the election manifesto on Tuesday.

BJP said women from BPL families will get an arogya suraksha card, with which they can buy groceries and medicines worth Rs 2,500 every month. It also promised two free LPG cylinders a year (one each during Onam and Christmas) to poor families and 20,000 litres of drinking water/month free to every household. BJP added that it will work with Centre and TN govt to ensure safety for Kerala and water for TN, with regard to Mullaperiyar issue.

BJP said it will protect Sabarimala, Guruvayur and all other places of worship by revamping devaswom boards to increase participation of devotees in temple management. It promised to end corruption through a time-bound CBI enquiry into Sabarimala gold heist. It also promised to launch Sabarimala Infrastructure Development Mission to undertake large-scale devotee-centric infrastructure development.

Other major announcements include minimum support price for all crops that require support. BJP said it will amend relevant land and forestry laws to allow plantation lands to adopt multi-crop agriculture. It added that Ayushman Bharat PM-JAY will be expanded to cover every Keralite, providing a safety net during medical emergencies.

NDA promised an increased welfare pension of Rs 3,000 a month for women heads of poor households, widows and senior citizens aged over 70. It promised to establish a high-speed railway network connecting Thiruvananthapuram and Kannur. BJP said it will complete all phases of Kochi Metro and bring Metro services in Thiruvananthapuram and Kozhikode.

BATTLEGROUND KERALA

BJP said it will launch an employment-linked incentive scheme. Under this, it will provide a soft loan of Rs 1 lakh for each job created for residents to enterprises in state.

Other major promises include development of Vizhinjam as a major industrial complex by establishing a ship repair and marine engineering cluster, an elevated double-rail line from Nemom yard to Vizhinjam Port and a dedicated industrial corridor surrounding the port. BJP said it will transform state-sponsored education to offer optional English medium over the next five years.

It said corporations will be developed as economic engines through a tailored vision. It said Thiruvananthapuram will be developed as IT and innovation capital, Kochi as India's shipbuilding capital, Kozhikode as healthcare and medical innovation hub, Thrissur as Kerala's cultural tourism capital, Kollam as blue economy cluster for marine exports and Kannur as defence innovation hub.

Tennis legend Paes joins BJP before Bengal elections

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Leander Paes during his joining ceremony at the BJP HQ in New Delhi on Tuesday

Kolkata/New Delhi: Olympic bronze medallist and multiple Grand Slam doubles champion Leander Paes crossed over to BJP Tuesday, exiting Trinamool Congress after a brief stint.

At BJP headquarters in New Delhi, Paes, 52, framed the move as a new "responsibility" after four decades in sport. "I have played for the country… I wish to serve youth and countrymen now," he said, thanking PM Narendra Modi for the opportunity. Party functionaries pitched the tennis legend's entry as a signal to urban voters and younger demographics, pushing back against criticism that BJP focuses narrowly on Hindu causes.

BATTLEGROUND WEST BENGAL

Junior Union minister Sukanta Majumdar called Paes "a son of Bengal", citing his upbringing in Kolkata and lineage tracing back to 19th-century poet and playwright Michael Madhusudan Dutt. Party functionaries expect his profile — Christian, Goan roots, Kolkata upbringing — to widen outreach among non-Hindu communities and urban middle class.

Paes had met BJP national president Nitin Nabin in Kolkata last week, fuelling speculation. He was inducted by minority affairs minister Kiren Rijiju along with senior functionaries.

Storm outside Bengal CEO office over voters' inclusion

Kaushik Pradhan, Debashis Konar & Dwaipayan Ghosh | TNN

Kolkata: The Election Commission Tuesday ordered a probe into illegal submissions of Form 6 in bulk for voter inclusions after the issue snowballed into a major stand-off and sporadic clashes between Trinamool and BJP workers outside the Bengal CEO's office.

It all began around 1 pm when Trinamool supporters gathered outside the CEO's office on Strand Road. They alleged that a youth was carrying 400 Form 6 applications in a plastic bag. Party workers said they caught him and demanded his arrest. Police later detained the suspect. CCTV visuals also showed a youth entering the premises with a stack of papers. Soon after, BJP workers and supporters from north Kolkata gathered at the site.

Police and central forces had to enforce prohibitory orders and chase away protesters after sporadic clashes between the two sides that continued for four hours.

Trinamool later filed an FIR alleging BJP was illegally submitting Form 6 applications. In the evening, Bengal CEO Manoj Agarwal said he had spoken to authorities concerned for implementing prohibitory orders. "I am waiting for its enforcement. If it is not implemented, I will have to take direct control," he said, adding that Kolkata police commissioner Ajay Nand was submitting a report on the incident.

Announcing a probe into the Trinamool's allegation of bulk submissions of Form 6, CEO Agarwal said, "There are no restrictions on submitting documents to govt offices. I was unaware that such a large number of Form 6 applications had been received."

Meanwhile, CM Mamata Banerjee accused BJP of hatching a "grave conspiracy" in collusion with the Election Commission to manipulate Bengal's electoral rolls.

Dissent in AIADMK over seat allocation continues

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Chennai: Signs of dissent continued in the AIADMK over ticket allocation, with a town secretary from Kallakurichi resigning from AIADMK and a former MLA from Mayiladuthurai stepping down from his party post in protest. Former district secretary of Mayiladuthurai VGK Senthilnathan has also hit out AIADMK leaders for denying him ticket.

BATTLEGROUND TAMIL NADU

AIADMK town secretary from Kallakurichi, Babu, on Tuesday submitted his resignation at the party's candidate introduction meeting. He then prostrated on the dais where senior functionaries were seated to thank everyone before leaving the hall.

Dejected over being denied a ticket for the second consecutive time for his wife Alaguvelu, who was elected from the constituency in 2011, Babu said he was quitting because of `stress.'

"There is no difference of opinion that AIADMK should win. But I am not well both physically and mentally. I am under a lot of stress, so I cannot continue as town secretary. I thank everyone who worked with me and request you to ensure the victory of brother Rajiv Gandhi," Babu said before submitting his resignation during the candidate introduction function. He then prostrated before party functionaries with folded hands and left the venue.

Meanwhile, Mayiladuthurai district unit's presidium chairman and former Sirkazhi MLA V B Bharathi sent a resignation letter to party general secretary **Edappadi K Palaniswami**, registering his protest against former minister and Sirkazhi constituency candidate O S Manian.

"I was anguished over the selection of Manian for the Sirkazhi constituency. Since I am unable to work along with such persons, I have decided to resign from the party post," Bharathi said in the letter to the party leader.

Former district secretary of Mayiladuthurai Senthilnathan has also expressed his dissatisfaction and criticised Manian for denying him a party ticket for the Assembly election.

Vowing to protect TN, Stalin & EPS open fire at each other

Chennai: The election campaign in Tamil Nadu heated up on Monday, with chief minister M K Stalin and opposition leader Edappadi K Palaniswami playing on the same theme — danger. Stalin painted BJP as an "external danger", while EPS highlighted the "internal peril" of rising crime.

Stalin launched his campaign from Tiruvarur, his father M Karunanidhi's hometown, calling the election a larger political battle to safeguard the state. "If Tamil Nadu is to be protected from becoming a land of riots, the BJP–AIADMK alliance must be defeated," he said.

Stalin called EPS a "branch secretary" of BJP, accusing him of being a subordinate of the saffron party, compromising TN's interests. He highlighted the govt's welfare measures and DMK's manifesto, including the ₹8,000 coupon scheme.

In Sivakasi, EPS displayed a white shirt which he said was gifted by young girls. The shirt bore messages critical of DMK. "Only AIADMK can guarantee the safety of girls," he said. TNN

Union min's wife, ex-Cong neta in BJP's fourth West Bengal list

RohitKhanna
@timesofindia.com

Kolkata: BJP announced its fourth list of candidates for 13 assembly constituencies in Bengal on Tuesday, fielding Union minister Shantanu Thakur's wife, Soma Thakur, from Matua-dominated Bagdah, former Congress neta Santosh Pathak from Chowringhee, and former IPS officer Debashis Dhar from Sonarpur North.

Pathak, a four-time councillor of Kolkata Municipal Corporation, said, "I received offers from Trinamool earlier too. Sovon Chatterjee and Sudip Banerjee asked me to join the party multiple times. But I was disillusioned with Trinamool. BJP is the only force in Bengal which can dislodge them."

After Greater Cooch Behar People's Association neta Bangshibadan Barman joined BJP last week, the saffron party nominated two of its functionaries — Asutosh Barma from Sitai and Girija Shankar Roy from Natabari, dropping incumbent MLA Mihir Goswami.

Leader of opposition Suvendu Adhikari had said that Barman — chairman of Rajbanshi Development and Cultural Board — would not contest the polls.

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- Interested and eligible candidates can apply through the link: **https://www.gujaratgas.com/careers/current-openings/** with position name within 10 days from the date of advertisement.

GUJARAT GAS LIMITED
A GSPC Group Company – Government of Gujarat Undertaking
Corporate Office: Office No. 4 & 5, Ground Floor, IT Tower-2, Infocity, Gandhinagar 382009 Gujarat, India.
Website: www.gujaratgas.com

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SENIOR CONSULTANT – GENERAL MEDICINE FULL-TIME:

Qualification : M.D / DNB – General Medicine with minimum 8 yrs experience after PG. Candidates with minimum 5 yrs experience can apply for the post of Junior Consultant.

Candidates to apply with complete Bio-Data within 7 days to: MEDICAL SUPERINTENDENT
7 - 9, Koregaon Park, Pune - 411 001. Tel No.: 020-66099711
Email : svmmchr@gmail.com, svmmcpune@gmail.com

Indian Institute of Management Raipur

IIMR/Rec./2026/01 **Date : 01.04.2026**

RECRUITMENT NOTICE

Applications are invited for the post of **Deputy FA & CAO.** For complete details regarding eligibility, qualifications, and application process, visit: **www.iimraipur.ac.in/recruitment**

Last Date: 21 APRIL 2026

The Institution of Engineers (India)
8 Gokhale Road, Kolkata 700020

The Institution of Engineers (India) invites applications for the following position on contractual basis :

1. Secretary & Director General
2. Director (Engineering Staff College of India)

For detailed eligibility criteria with application form in prescribed format, please visit IEI website **www.ieindia.org**

SVKM'S NMIMS | NMIMS University (NAAC 'A++', Category-I)
For Academic Year 2026-27

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The University offers salary and other benefits in line with the **7th pay** commission guidelines and has a policy of facilitating & rewarding research outcomes.

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THE ACADEMIC AREAS | Business Environment & Strategy, Economics, Finance, Human Resources & Behavioural Sciences, Marketing, Operations & Data Sciences/Operations & Decision Sciences, Information Science/Technology, Law.

Last date to Apply : 12th April 2026

For detailed job description and qualifications required for the above positions (School/Campus wise), visit 'Careers' at www.nmims.edu or scan the QR code

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HIET
HINDUSTAN INSTITUTE OF ENGINEERING TECHNOLOGY
AVIATION COLLEGE

An Institution of Excellence in Aviation Education
A Unit of Hindustan Group of Institutions
Approved by AICTE & DGCA, New Delhi &
Affiliated to Directorate of Technical Education Govt of Tamilnadu.

Dr. K.C.G VERGHESE

HIET, one of the leading Technical Institutions established in 1968, invites application for the following positions at **Padappai, Chennai**

DIRECTOR - School of Aviation

Applications are invited for the post of Director to lead the academic and industry functions of our Aviation College.

Eligibility:
- Must satisfy DGCA CAR-147 (Basic) requirements for Chief Instructor.
- Preference will be given to B1 / B2 Licensed Aircraft Maintenance Engineers.
- Minimum 10–15 years of relevant aviation / maintenance / teaching experience in Aircraft Maintenance Engineering Training organizations, MROs, airlines, or aviation institutes.
- Strong experience in training delivery, regulatory compliance, DGCA documentation, curriculum delivery and student mentorship.

Key Responsibilities:
- Leading an aviation organisation as Training Manger or Accountable Manager.
- Ensure strict compliance with DGCA CAR-147 (Basic) regulations and quality standards.
- Manage academic delivery, faculty supervision, and practical training activities.
- Coordinate with DGCA authorities, aviation industry partners and institutional leadership.
- Oversee faculty development, examinations, and student performance with excellent placement.
- Ensure maintenance of training records, regulatory documentation and examination processes.

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AIRCRAFT MAINTENANCE ENGINEERING

Applications are invited for the post of Instructors to lead the academic and training functions of our Aviation College.

Eligibility:
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- Minimum 5–10 years of relevant aviation / maintenance / teaching experience in Aircraft Maintenance Engineering Training organizations, MROs, airlines, or aviation institutes.
- Retired candidates may also apply.
- Candidates with practical experience only need to apply.

What We Offer:
- Attractive remuneration commensurate with experience in industry.
- Opportunity to work in a reputed aviation education ecosystem.
- Leadership role in shaping future aircraft maintenance professionals.

How to Apply
Interested candidates may send their detailed resume with supporting documents within **10 days** to: **chairmanoffice@hiet.in**

CHAIRMAN
Hindustan Institute of Engineering Technology (Aviation College)
40, GST Road, St.Thomas Mount, Chennai - 600 016.
www.hiet.in

The Institute of Chartered Accountants of India
(Set up by an Act of Parliament)

The Institute of Chartered Accountants of India (ICAI) is a statutory body set up in 1949 by an Act of Parliament for regulation and development of the profession of Chartered Accountancy in India. With a legacy of 77 years, ICAI stands recognized as the world's largest professional accounting body, shaping the future of the profession through leadership, vision, and an unwavering focus on advancement.

Applications are invited from committed professionals for following positions at ICAI in varied functional areas contributing to the Institute's vision and growth

Qualification	Experience Required (in years)	No. of Vacancies
DIRECTOR - LEGAL : Pay Level – 16 (Rs 54 lakh p.a.)		
Bachelor's degree in Law from a recognized University	22	1
EXECUTIVE OFFICER : Pay Level – 10 (Rs 15.51 lakh p.a.)		
CA (Chartered Accountant)	Not essential	75
Legal (Bachelor's degree in Law from a recognized University)	Not essential	15
CS (Company Secretary)	Not essential	2
Sustainability (Ph.D. in Sustainability)	Not essential	3
Economics (Ph.D. in Economics)	2	1
Infrastructure (Bachelor's Degree in Engineering/Technology in Civil Engineering or Bachelor's Degree in Architecture)	2	2
Information Technology (Bachelor's Degree in Engineering/Technology in Computer Science Engineering /Information Technology Engineering)	2	10

To apply , refer the detailed advertisement on ICAI career page - https://www.icai.org/post/career-in-icai
Last Date for Submission of Applications: 15th April'2026

STATE INSTITUTE OF HOTEL MANAGEMENT
SIDDHPUR, GUJARAT

APPOINTMENT

The State Institute of Hotel Management (SIHM), Siddhpur, Gujarat is promoted by the Tourism Corporation of Gujarat Limited (TCGL), a Government of Gujarat undertaking, and is established as an autonomous institute approved by AICTE and affiliated with Gujarat Technological University (GTU). SIHM invites applications from passionate and outstanding individuals for the position of academic staff (Outsource Based) as below

Principal	Professor	Associate Professor	Assistant Professor
01	01	02	07

Food and Beverage Production, Room Division, Food and Beverage Service, Housekeeping, Accommodation Operations, Tourism, Front Office Management, Communication, and Management.

SIHM invites applications from passionate and outstanding individuals for the position of non-academic staff (Outsource based) as below:

Administrative Officer	Training and Placement Officer	Warden (Female) for Girl's Hostel	Accountant	Counsellor	Office Assistant
01	01	01	01	01	01

Note:
1. Applications may be submitted via email at **recruitment@ethosgroup.biz**, along with all educational and experience-related documents, within 15 days from the date of the advertisement.
2. Qualifications and experience shall be as per AICTE/GTU norms. Details regarding the qualifications and experience required for the above post are available on website: **www.ethosindia.com**
3. The appointment will be made through our manpower agency purely on outsource based, Ethos HR Management & Project Limited, in accordance with their prescribed terms and conditions. For further details, you may contact: **079-40056789.**

Last Date of Application :**15/04/2026**

Petronet LNG Limited
4th Floor, Tower I, World Trade Centre
Nauroji Nagar, New Delhi - 110 029, India

Redefine Your Career With PLL

Petronet LNG Limited (PLL) invites online application from dynamic and experienced professionals for the post of

DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

For detailed advertisement, eligibility, and submission of online application, please visit "Openings" section of Petronet LNG Limited website **www.petronetlng.in** w.e.f. **02/04/2026**. No other means / mode of application will be accepted.

Last date to receive online application is 21/04/2026 till 18:00 hrs. Addendum / Corrigendum, if any, shall be notified in the Company's website only.

THE MAHARAJA SAYAJIRAO UNIVERSITY OF BARODA
Vadodara - 390002, Gujarat, India
Accredited Grade 'A+' by NAAC

RECRUITMENT

The Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda invites 'Online Applications' for the Permanent Teaching Positions in various Faculties/Colleges in context of the Letter No. ED/MIS/e-file/3/2025/2912/KH-2, dated 30/5/2025 from Education Department, Government of Gujarat.
The candidate can apply online from **10-4-2026** at:
http://msubaroda.ac.in/Recruitment
The Last date for submitting the 'Online Applications' is 15-5-2026.
Further details are available on the website www.msubaroda.ac.in
under Notification No.ADE/1/10 of 2025-26
Notification No.ADE/1/11 of 2025-26
Notification No.ADE/1/12 of 2025-26
Notification No.ADE/1/13 of 2025-26
Notification No.ADE/1/14 of 2025-26
Notification No.ADE/1/15 of 2025-26
Notification No.ADE/1/16 of 2025-26
Note: Corrigendum (if any) will be put on University website only.

Place: Vadodara
Date: 28-03-2026
Sd/-
Registrar (Offg.)

Advertisement No. 39/2026
Government of India
Public Enterprises Selection Board
invites applications for the post of
Director (Finance)
in
Water and Power Consultancy Service (India) Limited
Last date of submission of application by the applicant is by 15:00 hours on **9th April, 2026**
Last date of forwarding of applications by the Nodal officers to PESB is by 17:00 hours **20th April, 2026**
For details login to website
https://www.pesb.gov.in

राष्ट्रीय प्रौद्योगिकी संस्थान अगरतला
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY AGARTALA
Agartala, Tripura, India, Pin-799 046

F.NITA.2(519-Estt)/2019/Vol-II/12082 Date: 11.03.2026

ADVERTISEMENT FOR RECRUITMENT OF OFFICERS

Application are invited from bonafide citizens of India for recruitment to various Non-Teaching positions for the following Officer posts;

Sl. No.	Name of Post	Classification	Level of Pay in 7th CPC	No. of Vacancies
01	Assistant Registrar	Group - A	Pay Level-10	1- SC (Direct Recruitment) 1- UR (Lien Vacancy)#, 1-Deputation
02	Assistant Librarian	Group - A	Pay Level-10	1- UR (Direct Recruitment)
03	Student Activity and Sports Officer	Group - A	Pay Level-10	1- (Deputation)
04	Scientific / Technical Officer	Group - A	Pay Level-10	1- (Deputation)

The UR category vacancy is against post on which an individual holds 'Lien'. In case the individual joins back NIT Agartala, the selected candidate will be reverted to parent organization and/or post previously held as the case may be. Hence, only the applications received from the employees of the Govt. organizations/central autonomous bodies, allowed to hold lien on their position at their parent organization, will be considered against this vacancy. (A supporting document to this effect needs to be submitted from their respective parent organization).
Online applications are invited on the prescribed format for the recruitment of various Non-Teaching positions in the Institute. Applicants are requested to go through the details of posts, educational qualifications, experience, other criteria and instructions for selection to Non-Teaching positions which are available on the Website (**http://www.nita.ac.in**).

- Opening of Online Application Form : 16/03/2026
- Initial Date of Closing of Online Application Form : 16/04/2026
- Extended Date of Closing of Online Application Form : 25/04/2026 by 5.00 pm

Registrar (I/c)
NIT Agartala

CONTRAPUNTO

I'd like to live as a poor man with lots of money

– PABLO PICASSO

Boomtown Blues

Jewar, UP, is the latest in a long list of Indian village settlements suffering birth pangs of town-making

India's newest airport in Jewar, UP, has made millionaires – dollar variety – of many farmers near Delhi. A few have got more than ₹20cr for their acquired land, which is $2.1mn at the current rate. And all of them have been living it up. **TOI** has reported how car showrooms have sprung up in the region. Premium SUVs, not hatchbacks, are bestsellers. As more land is bought for industrial parks and homes in the vicinity, more millionaires will be made. That's been the boomtown template since Potosi, Bolivia, at least. Silver turned the tiny settlement into a city rivalling London and Paris, in the 16th century. San Francisco grew 25-fold during the 19th century Gold Rush, making many fortunes, including those of Levi Strauss – of jeans fame – and Henry Wells and William Fargo, of the famous bank.

Indian boomtowns are different in one crucial way. Instead of gold, silver, or oil, they are founded on the need to urbanise. Be it highway, power plant, township, or IT park, land is the first requirement. So, landowners – mostly farmers – are the first millionaires. But there's more than money at stake here. Every boomtown is a society in churn. A centuries-old community – the village – is uprooted. Ties between residents severed. Some landowners become millionaires, yes, but their landless tenants are left without livelihood. There's also the crisis of work. Farmers enriched, but deprived of land, mostly don't know what to do with themselves. They are now too rich and proud to be factory workers, or cab drivers, and not qualified for white-collar work. It's easy to drift then. Imposing SUVs, and helicopter weddings, become social needs, when family status passed down with land is lost. Studies show that farmers whose land is acquired, struggle to blend in white-collar neighbourhoods, despite their wealth. Also, their wealth is soon splurged.

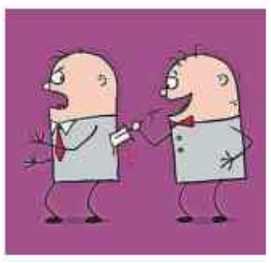
Boomtowns have another face, too – slums. The labour that moves in to build an airport, or houses and offices, comes with its own sense of displacement. Workers and residents, who later come to occupy these shiny towers, are displaced too. Nobody belongs. The largely male labour force, and crowding, raise crime. Civic infra is lagging – the state is always last to the party, be it in Noida, Gurgaon, Bengaluru, or Chennai. You'll say all of these are birth pangs, preliminary to a boomtown. Yes, but this is the 21st century. Why does town-making still have the frontier feel of the 16th, or the 19th, century?

Trust Or Bust

Why age cannot wither the names Mir Jafar, Quisling, Judas. They haunt us across time

As Kerala, West Bengal, and Tamil Nadu go to polls, SIR has shrunk all their voter rolls. By 3.2%, 10%, and 11.5%, respectively, so far. Behind these cold numbers, lie countless human stories. **TOI** has reported, for example, that at least 346 descendants of Mir Jafar have been struck off. He was, of course, the commander who betrayed the Bengal nawab at the Battle of Plassey. That was in 1757. Still, the phrase *Mir Jafari karna* continues to mean, to date, to act as a traitor. As disenfranchised voters appeal before tribunals, it must seem to many that they, too, are being Mir Jafar-ed. By their own.

Across cultures, there are names that live on and on, as synonyms of betrayal. It's not so much because these betrayals were the most consequential, as because they felt the most *personal* – a trusted insider crossing to the enemy. That psychological wound is what makes the betrayer's very name immortal, as an insult. Biplab Kumar Deb compares Mamata to Mir Jafar. She lobs the honorific back at BJP. It's a popular pastime. In Europe, Quisling does the same job, after the Norwegian Nazi collaborator. It seems to be the driving theme of history overall, with empires often falling to internal treachery. It's also at the heart of every moral tradition. Mahabharat is essentially a meditation on loyalty and betrayal within a family. There is Judas in Christianity, and *munafiquns* in Islam.



Faiz's *Subh-e azadi*, written during Partition, is an anguished reflection on Independence betrayed. *The Godfather* hinges on being stabbed in the back by trusted allies. In Beyoncé's *Lemonade*, it is infidelity that is chipping away at the artist. Enron, Lehman Bros, Bernie Madoff...the business world too is littered with unforgettable Judases. They haunt us. Because betrayal hits different from other negative experiences. It breaks the central social covenant: Trust. That's what family, tribe, nation, friendship, faith, even workplaces, are built on. We are not built to be betrayed by those we trust.

Paperless loo

To help save the planet, more people are switching from wipe to wash

Jug Suraiya

TP or not TP; that is the question. Had Hamlet, Prince of Denmark, been around today, that's the way he might have phrased his famous existential dilemma.

TP is the abbreviation for toilet paper that people in so-called advanced countries use to clean up, after having performed what in Indian parlance are referred to as morning ablutions.

East is East, and West is West, said Kipling, and the dividing line between the two is based not just on geographic location but on a practice of everyday personal hygiene: the West uses TP, the East uses water; one wipes, the other washes.

According to recent reports, the wipe-wash divide might soon be wiped out literally. The reason for this is based not on considerations of comparative personal cleanliness, but on the cleanliness of the planet as a whole.

While southern European countries like France and Italy have long provided the civilised amenity of the bidet adjacent to WC, English-speaking countries like US and UK, have remained resolutely water-free in this regard, compelling visitors from the East, particularly from the Indian subcontinent, furtively to smuggle bottles of drinking water into the cubicles of public toilets, making natives wonder if the practice is part of some religious ritual, which, in a sense, it is.

second*opinion*

Environmentalists say that in US alone, by far, the most prodigal user of TP, this single lavatorial product is a $50bn industry, which gobbles up entire forests every day to supply the wood pulp from which TP is made.

Now the clarion call of environmentalism is weighing in on the paperless loo in the wake of the paperless office as an issue, or tissue, of environmental responsibility.

The question that arises is: after TP what? European-style bidets are being mooted as an admittedly expensive alternative, requiring major re-plumbing work. A simpler and cheaper option is what is termed a 'hand-held shower spray', similar to the Indian hygiene faucet, which in urban locales has long replaced the traditional brass lota.

One way or another, it's RIP for TP, which will meet its Water-loo.

How To Count For The Future

Census 2027 begins today. It promises a great geospatial upgrade for the Indian state. Its digital mapping of the population, via DigiPin, is intended to achieve rare analytical depth. This should help not just govt, but also researchers, civil society, and entrepreneurs to build more local solutions

Nithiyanandam Yogeswaran

The world's largest census begins today. It will count us, but also map us with a sharper spatial lens than before. Past censuses were not blind to geography. They used location codes and published many statistics at the village, town, or ward level, which have supported planning for decades. Yet, a persistent limitation remained.

We often knew what existed, but not where it sat, not with the precision that modern service delivery increasingly demands. Census 2027, by design, moves closer to that missing layer, by linking field collection to digital maps at a finer operational unit.

A key shift is the move to a digital-first census. Data will be collected through mobile apps available on both Android and iOS devices, with an option for citizens to self-enumerate via an online facility. This is not a cosmetic change. It alters how census is organised, supervised, validated, and eventually used.

The operational design is structured into two phases: housing listing and housing operations, followed by population enumeration. This separation matters because it enables a more apparent distinction between the physical fabric of settlements, and the demographic profile of the people living within them. It also provides a logical sequencing: map and list first, then enumerate. Plus, it strengthens the foundation on which the second phase rests.

Behind the scenes, geospatial digital tools are expected to play a central role. A Census Management and Monitoring System is intended to manage and track operations in real time, and a Houselisting Block Creator web map application is meant to help charge officers, organise houselisting blocks digitally.

Blocks are not merely administrative conveniences. They are the bridge between what enumerators capture, and what planners can analyse spatially. In a digital workflow, the block becomes a mapped unit that can support thematic layers, such as housing conditions, access to drinking water, sanitation, building material, or exposure to local risks.

For policymakers and researchers, the value is substantial. Spatial layers make it easier to spot settlement patterns, infra deficits, and inequalities hidden by aggregate statistics. They can guide the placements of schools, anganwadis, health outreach, bus routes, and last-mile utilities. They can also strengthen preparedness for floods, heat stress, and disease surveillance, by pinpointing where vulnerability clusters, and where response capacity is weakest.

However, the real value of a digital census begins only when every household record is anchored to the correct mapped unit. Recording responses on a phone is not the critical leap. Correctly placing those answers on the map is.

In an exercise of this scale, slight inconsistencies in addresses, landmarks, or location tags can create avoidable mismatches later, complicating verification, deduplication, and integration across datasets.

Smartphone-based location capture has improved.

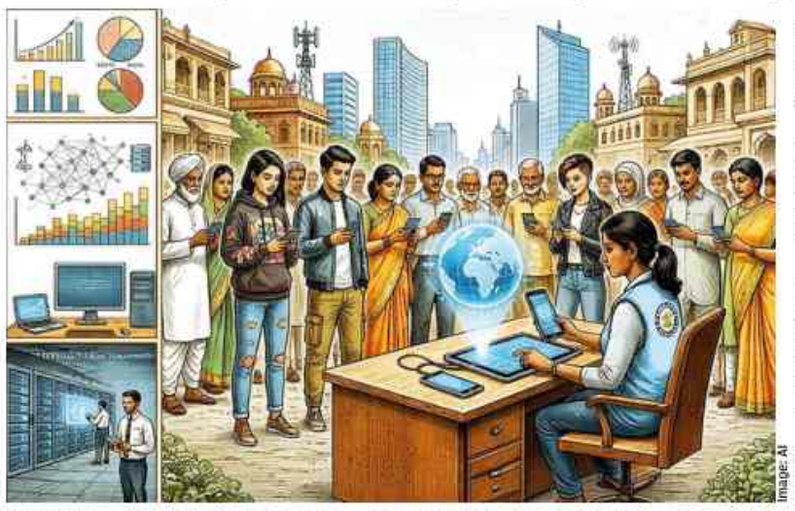


Image: AI

Modern devices can draw on multiple satellite navigation systems, and with sensible field guidance, location tagging can be broadly reliable across diverse settings. Still, reliability depends on conditions on the ground, handset quality, and the enumerator's practice. That is why training becomes more than a formality.

Preparing lakhs of field staff has been a massive administrative undertaking, but it has also been an opportunity to build a practical geospatial discipline. Simple training on when to capture location, how to confirm it, and how to read basic maps can lift consistency, without slowing fieldwork.

This is where DigiPin can add value as an additional attribute layer to the 2027 Census. At heart, DigiPin addresses a narrow but persistent problem: a PIN code is not an address, and free-form addresses often vary in spelling, abbreviations, and local naming conventions.

DigiPin converts latitude and longitude into a short 10-character alphanumeric code, tied to a small grid on the ground, roughly 4m by 4m. Developed by the Department of Posts, in collaboration with IIT Hyderabad and NRSC of ISRO, it is designed to be easy to communicate, and for systems to interpret.

For census operations, a DigiPin captured at the doorstep can serve as a standard location token across teams and devices, improving internal consistency, and simplifying later checks. It can be beneficial in dense neighbourhoods, informal settlements, and rapidly changing peri-urban layouts, where conventional addressing is incomplete or unstable.

This does not replace the census block structure. Instead, it is complemented by providing a precise point reference, which can help anchor entries within the block, and reduce ambiguity.

The wider benefit comes after enumeration. Consistent location references help census layers connect more smoothly with other planning datasets, such as utilities, health and education infra, mobility networks, and disaster preparedness systems.

At the same time, a more precise location raises legitimate privacy and security concerns. If location tokens are captured at scale, access must be controlled by role, purpose must be clearly limited, and personal identifiers should be separated from location codes, wherever feasible.

Strong safeguards, including encryption, audit trails, and periodic independent security testing, should be treated as essential, not optional, to sustain public trust in a more data-driven state. A system with adequate accountability, well-rooted in constitutional values, will also support India's legitimate data sovereignty concerns.

The 2027 digital census could become one of the world's most sizeable geospatial data-collection efforts, creating a national resource with rare analytical depth. It opens a wide window of opportunity for govt, researchers, civil society, and entrepreneurs to build solutions that are local, measurable, and accountable.

Basically, the simple message is that the scale is historic, the upside is real, and the risks are manageable – when location quality and data protection are treated as core design choices, rather than afterthoughts.

The writer is Professor, Geospatial Research Programme, Takshashila Institution

'War necessary...Iran wanted to control West Asian energy'

An adviser to Israeli govt argues that Tel Aviv & Washington must see the conflict to its 'logical end'. Else, the region will live in perpetual fear of the Ayatollahs, their missiles, nuclear programme, terror proxies

Dan Schueftan

Columnist based in Tel Aviv

The Iran war is, by far, the most important military confrontation of the 21st century, and possibly the most important event of this century. What is at stake is no less than the global order. Specifically, the ability of US to maintain the order established in recent generations, that enabled a large part of the world to maintain an open and liberal system, willing and able to defend itself against radical, totalitarian, and barbaric enemies.

The Ayatollah regime in Tehran is nothing like Stalin's was in Soviet Union, or that of Hitler in Nazi Germany. But it similarly harnessed the qualities of an impressive society, to the aggressive hallucinations of a radical and brutal regime. The Islamic revolution came up with a dangerous strategy, which could have had dramatic implications in West Asia, and a significant impact on the global order. The political arm of this strategy mobilised disgruntled Shiites and radical Sunnis, creating a ring of Iranian proxies throughout the region.

The military logic rested on a massive buildup of intermediate and long-range ballistic missiles, threatening vital assets of the global economy, intended to provide immunity to the Iranian military nuclear project. This project, in turn, was designed to grant ultimate immunity to the gradual hegemonising of West Asia, in a process that already succeeded before the war in dominating Lebanon, Syria, Iraq and Yemen. Had it not been interrupted by Israel since Oct 2023, it would, and was well on its way, to spread throughout the region.

This process, had it been allowed to develop and reach fruition, would have put under the Ayatollah regime a crucial part of the economic assets of West Asia, controlling a very considerable portion of the global energy supply from the Persian Gulf. Besieging and undermining Saudi Arabia, they could have controlled Mecca and Medina, affecting hundreds of millions of Muslims around the world. The combination of this control of West Asian assets, and the possession of ballistic missiles that can already reach Europe, would have had a dramatic impact on the global balance of power.

Such a strategic reality would have presented Western civilisation with an unprecedented challenge, when dealing with a potent regime of jihadists, that truly seeks to re-establish Islam as a leading global power. In this context, the loose but very significant cooperation and overlap of interests between Russia,

Image: AI

China, North Korea, and Iran, must be taken very seriously. What they have in common is not only a desire to undermine the global position of US, but also complementary abilities to promote their objectives, through sharing of strategic instruments. North Korean soldiers and Iranian drones helping Russia in Ukraine, and potential Russian and Chinese weapons and technology to help Iran, are cases in point.

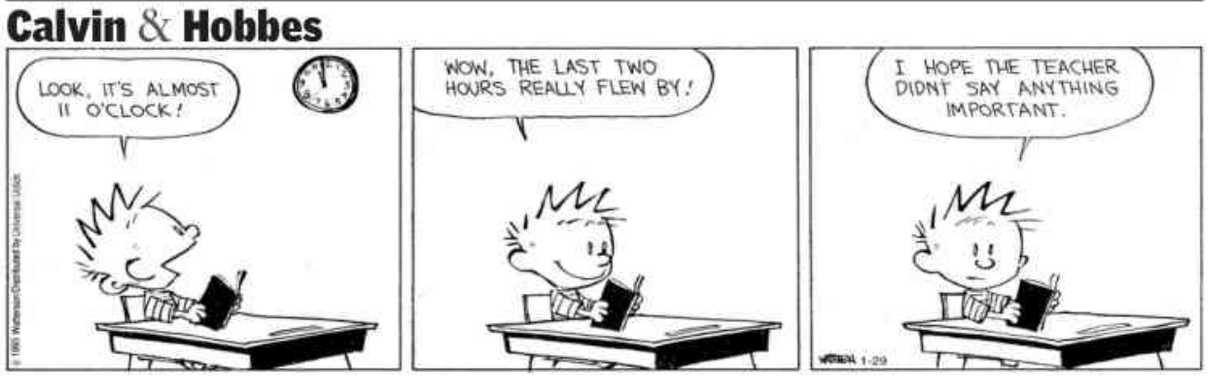
Building on the Israeli success since 2023 in dramatically eroding the capabilities of Iran's proxies, and considerably weakening Iran itself, US and Israel are now trying to take the next essential step. They seek to deny the Ayatollahs the ultimate weapons they prepared for decades to grant immunity to their efforts to impose Iran's hegemony over West Asia – the military nuclear project and the multitude of long-range ballistic missiles. Having eroded very considerably these two weapons, the challenge for Trump at the moment is to prove that US will not be economically defeated, domestically and abroad, by the threat to the global energy market and the welfare of the world, when Iran massively hits energy facilities in the Gulf.

The challenge is much more formidable than the threat presented by other rogue or irresponsible regimes seeking nuclear weapons, or the challenges that brought about other massive American military interventions since World War II. The nuclear projects of the regimes in North Korea and Pakistan are essentially defensive, trying to gain immunity from being forcefully overthrown in the first case, and responding to the perceived threat from India, in the second. In Korea, Vietnam, Iraq and Afghanistan, the implications were limited to one country, or a relatively narrow region. The Iranian challenge, by contrast, is offensive, immediately threatens to take over a crucial region, and would definitely have major global implications.

The strategic significance of a victory for the Iranian regime, through taking hostage the welfare and well-being of the world, could be catastrophic, particularly because it would be secured by rejecting all civilised codes of behaviour towards its own people, and towards its neighbours. It would allow Iran to pursue a nuclear arsenal that would shield these radicals in Tehran, when they dictate their terms to a frightened Europe, and pave the way for a Chinese (and Russian) domination in world affairs.

The free and prosperous reality people in the West enjoyed in the last few generations, increasingly shared by India and other nations outside the West, could then become a historic episode.

Calvin & Hobbes



Sacred*space*

It has always surprised me how little attention philosophers have paid to humour, since it is a more significant process of mind than reason. Reason can only sort out perceptions, but the humour process is involved in changing them.

Edward de Bono

Laughter: The Forgotten Doorway To Divinity

Jwalant Swaroop

Spirituality has been made unnecessarily serious. Priests, monks, and moralists have turned it into a grave business, as if truth can only be reached with a long face. But existence is not serious. Existence is playful.

Look at trees, rivers, and birds. Nothing is tense. Nothing is trying to be holy. Yet everything is perfectly in tune with life. A truly spiritual person cannot be heavy. He must be light. He must have a deep sense of humour about himself and about existence.

Laughter melts the ego. In a deep laugh, the mind slips. For a moment the constant chatter of thoughts stops. Suddenly there is a gap, pure, silent, alive. If you watch carefully, when laughter becomes total the 'one who laughs' disappears. There is only laughter.

That moment is meditation. This is why those who meditate deeply begin to laugh more, not less. They also begin to dance, because when the burden of mind drops, life becomes a celebration.

Perhaps that is why mystics across traditions have loved humour and storytelling. One of the most beloved characters in spiritual discourse of Osho is Mulla Nasruddin, the foolish wise man who exposes human stupidity through laughter.

THE SPEAKING TREE

Nasruddin's stories make us laugh, but behind the laughter lies a mirror. We suddenly recognise our own absurdities, our seriousness, our ego, our endless psychological dramas. Osho often uses Nasruddin's jokes not merely to entertain, but to shake people out of their mental rigidity. A good joke can penetrate deeper than a long sermon. And perhaps that is why April Fool's Day carries a hidden spiritual symbolism.

Once a year humanity unconsciously celebrates foolishness. For one day, seriousness is dropped and the ego is tricked. But the mystic knows something deeper, the real fool is the one who takes himself too seriously.

In Zen, the enlightened man often appears like a fool to the world. Childlike, playful, unpredictable. Because truth cannot live in heaviness. A good experiment is simple: Laugh totally...and then sit silently.

You will notice something beautiful. After laughter, the mind remains suspended for a few moments. In that pause, silence descends without effort. That silence is meditation. As consciousness grows, your being becomes lighter and almost weightless. Problems lose their seriousness. Life stops looking like a struggle and begins to look like a mysterious play.

Then laughter becomes prayer. Dance becomes meditation. Silence becomes your home. When you laugh totally, the mind disappears. And when the mind disappears, even for a moment, you enter the state of no-mind. That is the door to the divine.

Perhaps that is why enlightened people appear so simple, so playful, so childlike. Their spirituality is not heavy with discipline; it is light with awareness. So laugh deeply. Dance freely. Then sit silently.

You may discover that the shortest path to meditation is not seriousness; it is a celebration. And perhaps mystics would say that when you learn to laugh at yourself, you realise that every day feels like April Fool's Day.

From Punjab to Pilibhit, basmati belt feels West Asia shock

Freight rates have soared, cargo is stranded or rerouted, and payments are slowing. It is squeezing exporters in key rice-growing states and raising fears that a distant war could soon begin to hurt farm incomes, too

Vibhor Mohan, Meenakshi Sharma & Pankaj Shah | TNN

ROUTE RISK: Exporters say shipping lines are avoiding the Gulf route, forcing cargo onto longer, costlier detours

HIKE IN TRANSPORT COST

> Ocean freight to Gulf destinations has jumped from about $500 per container to nearly $2,000. This has diminished our exporting capacity considerably
>
> —**Naveen Porwal,** MEMBER OF ALL INDIA RICE EXPORTERS ASSOCIATION

The war in West Asia has dealt a sharp blow to India's basmati rice trade, disrupting shipments, inflating freight costs and unsettling exporters across Punjab, Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh, the country's key aromatic rice hubs.

What began as a distant geopolitical crisis is now rippling through one of India's most valuable farm export businesses. Exporters say consignments are being delayed, rerouted or offloaded at intermediary ports, while freight costs have surged and, in some cases, payment channels have slowed, too.

The strain is significant, because India's basmati export industry is estimated to be worth over Rs 50,000 crore. The country exports around 60 lakh tonnes of basmati rice annually, with more than half going to Iran, Saudi Arabia, Iraq and the UAE. Any prolonged disruption in this corridor threatens not just export margins, but eventually the prices offered to farmers in the mandis.

Port Chaos, Cost Shock

The immediate hit has come from logistics. Exporters across states say shipping lines have become reluctant to move cargo directly through the Gulf route, forcing consignments into uncertain and expensive detours.

In Punjab, exporters say containers are being offloaded midway at ports such as Oman and Dubai instead of reaching their intended destinations. Some shipments meant for Iran and Afghanistan have been discharged at Sohar and Khor Fakkan, exposing exporters to fresh handling, storage and demurrage charges.

Ranjit Singh Jossan, vice-president of the Basmati Rice Millers and Exporters Association, said war-risk and emergency surcharges have climbed to between $2,000 and $5,000 per container. "Shipping lines are not providing any clear timeline on when these containers will be delivered," he said.

Exporters say delayed deliveries and disrupted banking channels are stretching payment cycles and increasing working capital needs at a time when the trade is already carrying heavy inventory.

Punjab At The Faultline

Punjab, along with Haryana, accounts for 70-80% of India's basmati production, making it the region most exposed to any shock in Gulf demand. Iran alone has historically taken nearly one-third of India's basmati exports, which is why the latest disruption is being watched nervously in the state's rice belt.

Industry players say the impact is already visible in domestic prices. Premium varieties such as 1121 Sella have softened by Rs 400-Rs 800 per quintal in recent weeks as stocks that cannot move out quickly are weighing on the local market.

Unlike common paddy, basmati does not enjoy govt procurement at a minimum support price. "Basmati is left entirely to private traders," said Amarjit Singh, a basmati exporter from Amritsar. That leaves the crop far more exposed to global demand shifts, freight disruptions and changes in trade sentiment.

For now, the blow has not fully reached Punjab's fields because the next basmati season is still some months away and farmers are focused on wheat harvest. But traders warn that if the disruption persists, the effect will eventually travel back from exporters and millers to growers.

UP's Optimism Gives Way To Anxiety

In Uttar Pradesh, exporters say basmati shipments have plunged by 70-80% as the Gulf route has become more costly and uncertain.

Naveen Porwal, an Etawah-based member of the All India Rice Exporters Association, said ocean freight to Gulf destinations has jumped from about $500 per container to nearly $2,000. "That has diminished our exporting capacity considerably," he said, adding that exporters are now able to serve only a handful of importers.

That is a major blow to a state that has emerged as a key pillar of India's basmati economy. UP is the country's third-largest basmati producer, accounting for roughly a quarter of national output and a similar share of exports. With more than 4.6 lakh hectares under cultivation and production of around 25.5 lakh tonnes, the state had expected a strong export year on the back of a favourable monsoon and high-yielding varieties.

DIP IN EXPORT

> We have seen a drop of nearly 50,000 metric tonnes in basmati rice exports in March alone due to these disruptions
>
> —**Ajay Bhalotia,** GENERAL SECRETARY, ALL INDIA RICE EXPORTERS ASSOCIATION

Much of this production is concentrated in around 30 districts of western and central UP, including the Terai belt. The main varieties grown include Pusa Basmati 1121, 1509, 1692 and 1847. The state already has one Basmati Export Development Foundation centre in Modipuram, Meerut, while another is coming up in Pilibhit.

Pain Reaches The Village

The early signs of stress are now visible beyond the export trade.

Kuldeep Singh, a farmer from Khandepur village in Pilibhit, said mill payments have nearly stopped as rice movement has slowed. He added that farmers are also struggling to sell through procurement centres, while distress sales to millers are yielding poor returns.

What looks like a trade story in ports and boardrooms can quickly turn into a rural cash-flow problem. Lower prices and delayed payments reduce farmers' income, weaken purchasing power in villages and can affect local businesses and credit cycles. Exporters in UP say that if the slowdown persists, it could begin to shape planting decisions ahead of the next season.

MP's Cargo Pile-Up

In Madhya Pradesh, the impact is most evident in stranded cargo. Exporters estimate that around 500 containers of basmati rice worth nearly Rs 100 crore are stuck as maritime routes and port logistics remain disrupted.

Aleem Khan, a rice mill director and exporter from Raisen, said exports from his unit have virtually come to a halt. "There is demand from Gulf countries, but we are unable to export due to logistical challenges," he said.

According to Khan, freight costs that once ranged between $100 and $150 per container to Gulf destinations have now surged to $2,000-$2,500. During the peak season, he said, his unit would normally export 30-40 containers a month. Some of the rice was meant for Gulf markets during Ramzan and the Haj-linked demand period, adding to exporters' frustration.

Ajay Bhalotia, general secretary of the exporters' association, said, "We have seen a drop of nearly 50,000 metric tonnes in basmati rice exports in March alone due to these disruptions."

MP exported around 6 lakh metric tonnes in 2024-25, but industry estimates suggest that figure could slip to 5 lakh metric tonnes if the crisis persists.

Farmers Not Hit Yet, But Worried

For now, farmers in MP are not facing an immediate income shock because most have already sold their produce and stocks are largely held by traders, millers and exporters.

But that buffer may not last. Sarvagya Diwan, a basmati farmer from Kheri village in Narmadapuram district, said most of the crop in his area is bought by traders and exporters for overseas markets. "If shipments slow down because of the war, that will eventually affect prices and the upcoming cultivation season," he said.

That captures the central fear in all three states: the first blow is borne by exporters, but if the disruption lasts long enough, it reaches the farmgate.

ON FARM IMPACT

> If shipments slow down because of the war, that will eventually affect prices and the upcoming cultivation season
>
> —**Sarvagya Diwan,** A BASMATI FARMER FROM KHERI VILLAGE, MP

Trade Looks For A Way Around

Not everyone in the trade is equally pessimistic. Some exporters say the initial fear was of a much sharper collapse, given that India ships about 4 lakh metric tonnes of basmati rice to West Asia every month.

Dev Garg, vice-president of the Indian Rice Exporters Federation, said the war caused an immediate 7-8% drop in basmati prices. But the govt and industry then identified alternative pathways, including Mersin Port in Turkey and Khorfakkan Port in the UAE.

He said these steps have allowed exports to continue, even if at higher cost. Demand from West Asia remains strong, he said, and premium pricing has partly offset freight increases of over 20% in bulk cargo and 40% in container cargo. Exporters also point to govt support through a relief mechanism for disruptions in the Gulf maritime corridor, including war-risk coverage and reimbursement of part of the extraordinary freight and insurance burden.

A Fragile Export Crop

Even so, the war has exposed how vulnerable basmati remains to global shocks. It is a premium crop, heavily export-dependent and without the procurement safety net available to ordinary paddy.

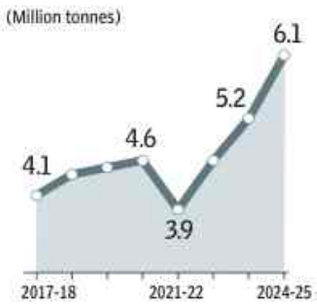
For now, demand for Indian basmati has not vanished. What has broken is the chain that carries it from India's rice belts to West Asia. If that chain is restored soon, exporters may yet recover. But if the disruption drags on, the damage could run much deeper.

Shadab Raza

A rice mill in UP's Lakhimpur Kheri

WHAT'S AT STAKE

Basmati exports from India have been rising steadily



Top 5 export destinations are in West Asia

	Value ($ million)	Quantity (Mn tonnes)
Saudi Arabia	1,203.7	1.2
Iraq	850.1	0.9
Iran	753.2	0.9
Yemen	358.3	0.4
UAE	364.5	0.4

Source: Ministry of commerce and industry

कार्यालय मुख्य अभियन्ता, नगर निगम, बरेली
अल्पकालीन पुन: ई-निविदा आमन्त्रण सूचना

पत्रांक: 387/मु0अभि0/नि0वि0/2025-26 दिनांक: 30.03.2026

नगर निगम, बरेली द्वारा नगर निगम, बरेली के कर्मचारियों हेतु रामपुर गार्डन परिसर, बरेली (उ0प्र0) में 2 बीएचके एवं 3 बीएचके आवासीय भवनों का डिजाइन, इंजीनियरिंग, सामग्री की आपूर्ति, निर्माण, परीक्षण, कमीशनिंग एवं हैंडओवर कार्य EPC (Engineering, Procurement & Construction) (टर्नकी) आधार पर कराये जाने हेतु योग्य, अनुभवी एवं पंजीकृत ठेकेदारों / फर्मों से टू-विड पद्धति (तकनीकी एवं वित्तीय) के माध्यम से निम्न प्रकार से ई-निविदायें आमंत्रित की जाती हैं। निविदा खोले जाने की तिथि में यदि अवकाश होगा तो निविदायें अगले कार्य दिवस में खोली जायेंगी।

अवस्थापना निधि के अन्तर्गत प्रथम ई-निविदा आमंत्रित हेतु (क्रमांक सं0. 1)	
ई-निविदा डाउनलोड प्रारम्भ की तिथि/समय	02.04.2026 (11:00 AM)
ई-निविदा अपलोड की प्रारम्भ तिथि/समय	02.04.2026 (10:00 PM)
ई-निविदा अपलोड की अन्तिम तिथि/समय	08.04.2026 (05:00 PM)
ई-निविदा खोली जाने की तिथि/समय	09.04.2026 (12:00 PM)
फाईनेशियल ई-निविदा खोली जाने हेतु	After Technical Evaluation

कार्य का विवरण, नियम व शर्तें नगर निगम बरेली के वेबसाईट www.nagarnigambareilly.com पर ई-निविदा लिंक एवं ई-पोर्टल http://etender.up.nic.in पर उपलब्ध है। किसी परिवर्तन, संशोधन व अतिरिक्त सूचनाओं के लिये उक्त वेबसाइट पर देखी जा सकती है।

मुख्य अभियन्ता
नगर निगम, बरेली।

AHMEDABAD MUNICIPAL CORPORATION
LIGHT DEPARTMENT
TENDER NOTICE

AMC invites sealed competitive bids from interested Bidders for the below mentioned work

1	IMPLEMENTATION OF 125 MW (AC) GRID-CONNECTED GROUND-MOUNTED SOLAR PV POWER PROJECT ALONG WITH 12.5 MW/ 50 MWh BATTERY ENERGY STORAGE SYSTEM (BESS) UNDER GROUP CAPTIVE MODE FOR AHMEDABAD MUNICIPAL CORPORATION (AMC) IN THE STATE OF GUJARAT	
Online Submission up to		Date : 27/04/2026 Only up to 04:00 PM.
Last Date of Submission of (Hardcopy)		Date : 29/04/2026 up to 04:00 PM.
Tender details available on		https://tender.nprocure.com

14001/26/2526

INDUSTRIAL PROMOTION AND INVESTMENT CORPORATION OF ODISHA LIMITED
(An ISO 9001-2008 Certified State Level Nodal Agency)
IPICOL HOUSE, JANPATH, BHUBANESWAR - 751022, ODISHA,
Tel: 0674-2542601, Fax: 0674-2543766

RfP for SELECTION of IT CONSULTING AGENCY

Proposals are invited from eligible bidders for selection of an IT Consulting Agency to provide technical support and transaction advisory services for revamping the GoSWIFT (Single Window Clearance System) of the Government of Odisha. For tender details, please visit **www.ipicolodisha.com.**
Date of Publishing of Tender: 31 March 2026
Deadline for Submission of Pre-Bid Query: 05:00 PM, 07 April 2026
Last date for submission of proposals: 12:00 PM on 27 April, 2026

OIPR-14001/14005/1/25-26/0002

25001/378/2526

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF CONSTRUCTION ENGINEER
RURAL WORKS CIRCLE, SUNDARGARH
Office Order No. 2035 // Date. 28.03.2026

Near Bansa Durga Temple, Sankara, Sundargarh, Dist: Sundargarh PIN-770020
Email: serw_sundargarh@yahoo.com Via E-mail/ E-despatch

1st Corrigendum

The date of availability of tender online/ date of seeking clarification/ date of opening of tender for all the works invited under NIT Letter No.1502 dtd 07.03.2026 vide Bid Identification No: Online - **RWCCESNG-39 of 2025-26** are hereby modified as follows:

Procurement Officer	Bid Identification No.	Availability of tender On-line for bidding	Availability of tender On-line for bidding upto	Last Date & Time for Seeking Tender Clarification	Technical Bid Opening	Financial Bid Opening
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Chief Construction Engineer, Rural Works Circle, Sundargarh	RWCCESNG -39 of 2025-26	06.04.2026 11:00 AM	20.04.2026 5:00 PM	18.04.2026 5:00 PM	21.04.2026 11:00 AM	Will be intimated separately

All other terms and Conditions are remained Unchanged.

Sd/-
Chief Construction Engineer
Rural Works Circle, Sundargarh

OIPR-25001/25133/1/25-26/0051

32001/270/2526

GOVT. OF ODISHA
OFFICE OF THE ENGINEER-IN-CHIEF, WATER RESOURCES ODISHA, BHUBANESWAR
'e' Procurement Notice No. CEMKS 19 OF 2025-26

1. Name of the work : **Cement Concrete Lining to Sukapaika South Channel from RD 0.00 km to RD 21.00 km off-taking from RD 8.534 km of Disty No.1.**
2. Amount put to Tender : Rs. 29,61,44,914.00
3. Bid Document Cost : Rs. 10,000.00 (online)
4. E.M.D : Rs.29,61,500/-
5. Class of Contractor : "Special" Class & "Super" Class
6. Period of Completion : 24 calendar months
7. Other details are as follows

Procurement Officer	Bid Identification No.	Availability of Tender On-line for bidding		Date of Opening of Technical Bid (Cover-I)
		From	To	
Chief Engineer & BM, Mahanadi Kathajodi System, Bhubaneswar	CEMKS MSD 06 of 2025-26	06.04.2026 10.00 hrs	27.04.2026 17.00 hrs	28.04.2026 11.00 hrs

8. e-mail Id : **celmbbbsr@yahoo.co.in**

Further detail conditions can be seen from the Govt. website **www.tendersodisha.gov.in**
The Corrigendum/cancellation of Tender, if any, will be uploaded and can be seen from the above website only.

Sd/-
Chief Engineer & Basin Manager
Mahanadi Kathajodi System
Bhubaneswar

OIPR-32001/32520/1/25-26/0033

25001/377/2526

ଓଡିଶା ସରକାର
ମୁଖ୍ୟ ନିର୍ମାଣ ଯନ୍ତ୍ରୀକ କାର୍ଯ୍ୟାଳୟ
ଗ୍ରାମ୍ୟ ନିର୍ମାଣ ମଣ୍ଡଳ, ସମ୍ବଲପୁର
Office order No. 1968 // Dated. 25.03.2026

By e-Despatch/By e-Mail
E-Mail- serwcirclesbp@yahoo.com

1st corrigendum Bid Identification No.Bridge Tender Online RWCSBP-32/2025-26.

Following modifications are hereby made to the notice inviting tender vide this office Bid ID No. Bridge tender Online RWCSBP-32/2025-26 for the work (1) Construction of Bridge over Sarbejal Nallah on Jamankira to Sarbejal road in the District of Sambalpur under SBY for the year 2025-26. (2) Construction of Bridge over Ranj river on Lebidi-Heerapali P.S. Road in the District of Bargarh under SBY for the year 2025-26.

1. The availability of tender online for bidding may be read as 25.03.2026 from 11.00 AM to 02.04.2026 up to 5.00PM instead of from 06.03.2026 from 11.00 AM to 25.03.2026 up to 5.00 PM.
2. The last date & time for seeking clarification may be read as 31.03.2025 up to 5.00 PM instead of 23.03.2026 up to 5.00 PM.
3. The date & time of technical opening bid may be read as 04.04.2026 at 11.00 AM instead of 26.03.2026 at 11.00 AM.

All other terms and condition remain unchanged.

Sd/-
Chief Construction Engineer,
R.W.Circle, Sambalpur

OIPR-25001/25091/1/25-26/0039

32001/279/2526

GOVERNEMENT OF ODISHA
DEPARTMENT OF WATER RESOURCES
Office of the Additional Chief Engineer,
Western Irrigation Circle, Bhawanipatna-766001
E-Mail-ID-sewic2012@gmail.com
NOTICE INVITING TENDER
e-Procurement Notice No. ADDLCE, WIC - 03/2025-26
PERCENTAGE RATE e-TENDER

1. The Additional Chief Engineer, Western Irrigation Circle, Bhawanipatna, Dist-Kalahandi, Pin-766001, (Odisha) on behalf of governor of Odisha invites **"PERCENTAGE RATE Bids" IN DOUBLE COVER SYSTEM**, in electronic tendering system for the construction works detailed in the table below.

Package No	**ADDLCE, WIC (ULID) 01/2025-26 & ADDLCE, WIC (ULID) 02/2025-26**
Types of Work	**02, (Two) Nos 1) Construction of D-type Quarter (Block-II) for staff of Upper Lanth Irrigation Division, Belpada. 2) Construction of E-type Quarter (Block-II) for staff of Upper Lanth Irrigation Division, Belpada.**
Approximate value of work	**Varies from Rs.105.32 Lakhs to Rs.134.84 Lakhs (Excluding GST)**
Period of Completion	**10, (Ten) Calendar Months.**
Classification of Bidder	**'A' & 'B' Class Contractors only**
Tender documents available on website.	Can be downloaded from Website (**http://www.tendersodisha.gov.in**)
Bid documents available Date and Time.	**06.04.2026 at 11.00 Hrs**
Bid clarification start date & Closing date.	**06.04.2026 to 10.04.2026 during office hours**
On Line Bid submission closing date and time.	**22.04.2026 at 17.00 Hrs**
Date, Time and Venue of opening of Technical bid **online.**	**23.04.2026 at 11.00 Hrs** office of the Additional Chief Engineer, Western Irrigation Circle, Bhawanipatna.
Date/Time of Opening of Financial Bid	To be intimated after evaluation of Technical Bid.

Further details can be seen from Govt. website. Any addendum / corrigendum / cancellation to the above notice will be published in the Govt. website **www.tendersodisha.gov.in** only.

Sd/-
Additional Chief Engineer
Western Irrigation Circle, Bhawanipatna

OIPR-32001/32178/1/25-26/0001

Bangalore Metro Rail Corporation Limited
(A Joint Venture of GoI & GoK)
E-mail: pdretail@bmrc.co.in, Website: www.bmrc.co.in

No: BMRCL/A(PD)/LFS-1/2025-26 Date: 31.03.2026

NOTICE INVITING TENDER

KPP Portal Ref. No.: BMRCL/2025-26/SE0042
BMRCL Tender No.: BMRCL/A(PD)/LFS-1/2025-26 Dtd.: 31/03/2026

Name of the Tender: Request for Proposal (RFP) for Grant of License for Development and Operation of a Large-Format CBD Destination Commercial and Experience Space at MG Road Metro Station.

Bangalore Metro Rail Corporation Limited (BMRCL) has invited bids from interested parties via e-Tender through the Karnataka Public Procurement Portal **(https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in)** for licensing of Large-Format CBD Destination Commercial & Experience Space at MG Road Metro Station. The Key Dates of Tender is as mentioned below;

1	**Tender Notification No. and date**	BMRCL/A(PD)/LFS-1/2025-26, Dtd.:31/03/2026
2	**Date from which Bid document is ready for download through Karnataka Public Procurement Portal of Government of Karnataka (https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in)**	31.03.2026
3	**Last date for seeking clarification, if any.**	21.04.2026 before 5:30 P.M.
4	**Date of Pre-bid Meeting and venue.**	23.04.2026 at 11:30 A.M. at BMRCL Conference Hall, 3rd Floor, BMTC Complex, Kengal Hanumanthaiah Road, Shantinagara, Bengaluru-560 027
5	**Last date and time for uploading of Bid in Karnataka Public Procurement Portal platform**	05.05.2026 before 5:00 P.M.
6	**Date and time of opening of tenders: Technical Bid & Technical Evaluation**	06.05.2026 after 5:30 P.M.

Sd/- Director (Finance)

6001/44/2526

FISHERIES & ANIMAL RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT
GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA
DIRECTORATE OF FISHERIES, ODISHA, CUTTACK
Website: https://fisheries.odisha.gov.in, https://dahvs.odisha.gov.in
Phone: 0671-2414061, Email: director.odifish@gmail.com

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL
RFP No.4220 Dated: 30.03.2026

Fisheries & Animal Resources Development Department, Odisha intends to engage a media consulting agency for social media management & creative productions for smooth operation of IEC activities taken up by the two Directorates i.e. Directorate of Fisheries and Directorate of AH&VS under F&ARD Dept. Director of Fisheries, Odisha, Cuttack of Fisheries & Animal Resources Development Department, Odisha invites sealed proposals from eligible bidders for **"Media Consulting Agency for Social Media management & Creative Productions"** under administrative control of Director of Fisheries, Odisha, Cuttack.

The RFP Document containing ***details of scope of work, deliverables, eligibility criteria, professional requirements and other bidding parameters*** can be accessed and downloaded from the website of F&ARD Department **https://fard.odisha.gov.in**, Directorate of Fisheries **https://fisheries.odisha.gov.in** and Directorate of Animal Husbandry & Veterinary Services **https://dahvs.odisha.gov.in**.

Important dates for the bidding process:

Sl. No.	Critical Events	Time Line
1.	Date of Issue of RFP	31.03.2026
2.	Submission of Pre-Bid Queries	07.04.2026 up to 5:30 PM
3.	Pre-Bid Meeting	08.04.2026 at 3:30 PM
4.	Last Date and Time for Submission of Bid	20.04.2026 up to 5:30 PM
5.	Opening of Technical Bid	22.04.2026 at 11:30 AM
6.	Technical Presentation	27.04.2026 at 11:30 AM
7.	Opening of Financial Bid	28.04.2026 at 11:30 AM

The proposal complete in all respect in a sealed envelope clearly mentioning on top of it **"Selection of Media Consulting Agency for Social Media Management & Creative Productions"** must reach the undersigned through **Speed Post / Registered Post only** latest by **20.04.2026 up to 5:30 PM.** The proposals received beyond the scheduled date and time shall not be considered and will be outrightly rejected. Further, the authority reserves the right to reject any/all proposals without assigning any reason thereof.

OIPR-6001/6015/1/25-26/0003 Sd/- **Director of Fisheries**

TIMES GLOBAL

THE TIMES OF INDIA, BENGALURU | WEDNESDAY, APRIL 1, 2026

WHEN LIFE GIVES YOU LEMONS, SQUIRT SOMEONE IN THE EYE — CATHY GUISEWITE

CELINE DION ANNOUNCES COMEBACK AFTER 4 YEARS WITH 10 CONCERTS IN PARIS THIS FALL: 'I'M SO READY FOR THIS'

TAYLOR SWIFT SUED BY A VEGAS PERFORMER WHO SAYS STAR'S 'THE LIFE OF A SHOWGIRL' VIOLATES HER TRADEMARK RIGHTS

US hits Isfahan, home to one of Iran's main nuclear sites

Iran's Guards Threaten To Target US Tech Cos In West Asia

AFP

A video grab shows smoke billowing as explosions rock Iran's Isfahan

Reuters

The damaged Kuwait-flagged Al-Salmi crude oil tanker on Tuesday

Dubai: US strikes hit the city of Isfahan on Tuesday that is home to one of Iran's main nuclear sites, sending a massive fireball into the sky, and Tehran attacked a fully loaded Kuwaiti oil tanker in the Persian Gulf. The attacks were testament to the intensity of the war more than a month after the US and Israel launched their first strikes.

US President Donald Trump shared footage of the attack on Isfahan. The central city is home to one of three nuclear enrichment sites attacked by the US in a 12-day war in June, and analysts believe much of Iran's highly enriched uranium is likely stored there.

The video shared by Trump appeared to show a massive attack on Isfahan, and Nasa fire-tracking satellites suggest explosions happened in a mountainous region on the city's southern edge. Iran has not confirmed the attack.

A satellite image taken just before the June war suggests Tehran transferred a truckload of highly enriched uranium to a nuclear facility about 20km from Tuesday's strikes. Analysts believe the truck — which the image showed going into a tunnel loaded with 18 blue containers — likely carried most or all of Iran's stockpile of uranium enriched up to 60% purity. That's a short, technical step to weapons-grade levels.

Iran says will target US tech firms if more leaders killed

Iran's Revolutionary Guards said that they would target leading US technology firms like Apple, Google and Meta if more Iranian leaders were killed in "targeted assassinations". "These companies, starting from 8pm Tehran time on Wednesday, April 1, should expect the destruction of their relevant units in exchange for every assassination in Iran," the Guards said in a statement listing the names of 18 companies it alleged were complicit in the killing of officials. "We advise the employees of these institutions to immediately leave their workplaces to preserve their lives," it added.

The Guards' statement said the US govt and tech giants had "ignored our repeated warnings regarding the necessity" of halting operations targeting top Iranian officials, alleging that the tech firms are the "main element in designing and tracking assassination targets". As a result, these 18 companies — which also include Intel, Microsoft and Oracle, as well as Tesla, analytics firm Palantir, and chip giant Nvidia — risk retaliation, the statement said.

Iran prez seeks guarantees to end ongoing war

Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian said his country but wants guarantees that the conflict would not be repeated to end the ongoing war. "We possess the necessary will to end this conflict, provided that essential conditions are met — especially the guarantees required to prevent repetition of the aggression," Pezeshkian said in a phone conversation with the president of the European Council, according to a statement from his office, reiterating a key demand of Tehran's. Responding to a 15-point US plan for ending the war last week, Iran issued a five-point counterproposal that also called for ending the "aggression" and establishing a mechanism guaranteeing that neither Israel nor the US would return to war, Iranian media reported. "The solution to normalising the situation is the cessation of their aggressive attacks," Pezeshkian said on Tuesday.

Oil tanker ablaze off Dubai

Tehran attacked and set ablaze a fully loaded crude oil tanker off Dubai on Tuesday. Authorities in Dubai said the fire on the Kuwait-flagged Al-Salmi had been brought under control following a drone attack, with no oil leak and no injuries to the crew. Kuwait Petroleum Corp, the ship's owner, said the vessel's hull was damaged. LSEG Data showed the vessel was heading to Qingdao in China, and was carrying 1.2 million barrels of Saudi crude oil and 800,000 barrels of Kuwaiti crude, according to monitoring service TankerTrackers.com. The Al-Salmi may not have been the intended target. Iran's Revolutionary Guards said they had targeted a container ship in the Gulf over its ties with Israel. But they appeared to be referring to the Singapore-flagged Haiphong Express, which was anchored next to the Al-Salmi, according to shipping data. AGENCIES

Israel to occupy parts of Lebanon, over 6L residents to be kept out

Israel said it would take control of large swaths of southern Lebanon and prevent more than 600,000 residents from returning to their homes as part of the campaign against militant group Hezbollah. Defence minister Israel Katz said the army would establish a security zone inside Lebanon and control the entire area up to the Litani, referring to the river that lies as much as 30 kms from the Israeli border.

Those who have fled fighting in the area won't be allowed back until the safety of residents in the north of Israel is assured, Katz said. All homes in villages along the border will be destroyed in the meantime, he added. Almost 1,250 people have been killed in the campaign to date, according to the Lebanese health ministry, and a million more displaced. Ten Israeli soldiers have been killed. BLOOMBERG

UN: Arab nations may lose $200bn due to war in Iran

The US and Israeli war against Iran could wipe out nearly $200 billion worth of economic growth across West Asia, according to an analysis by the UN Development Program of the economic and social consequences for Arab states. Arab nations stand to lose between $120 billion and $194 billion from gross domestic product as a result of disruptions from the war, said the study which was released early Tuesday.

The loss could result in the regional unemployment rate rising by as much as four percentage points, costing some 3.6 million jobs and pushing as many as four million people into poverty, the report says. The hardest-hit regions would be concentrated in Gulf Cooperation Council states and in the Levant, with each region set to lose over 5.2% of their GDP. BLOOMBERG

US B-52 bombers have started to fly missions over Iran: Pentagon

Hegseth: Tehran Still Retains Ability To Strike

The US military has begun flying B-52 bombers over Iranian territory for the first time since the war began, Gen Dan Caine, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, said on Tuesday, suggesting that Iran's air defences have been significantly degraded. But despite a monthlong US-Israeli bombing campaign, Tehran still retained the ability to retaliate, defence secretary Pete Hegseth told reporters. "They will shoot some missiles; we will shoot them down," Hegseth said at the Pentagon alongside Gen Caine. It was their first public briefing on the war in nearly two weeks, when they took questions from reporters on March 11.

Gen Caine said that US warplanes were now focused on destroying supply chains that fed Iran's missile, drone and naval ship building facilities, choking off the country's ability to replace munitions destroyed in thousands of American bombing runs. B-52 bombers — unlike the agile or radar-evading aircraft in the US arsenal — are considered highly vulnerable to antiaircraft systems. The decision to fly the planes directly over Iran signifies the American military's confidence that it has largely destroyed Iran's capability to take down the lumbering bombers.

Hegseth also revealed he had made an unannounced trip to West Asia over the weekend to visit troops at bases around the region. He again said that the US was "closer than ever before to winning."

Hegseth also said the next few days would be decisive and warned Tehran that the conflict would intensify if it did not make a deal. He said the US was prepared to continue the war if Iran did not comply. "We have more and more options, and they have less ... in only one month we set the terms, the upcoming days will be decisive," Hegseth said. "Iran knows that, and there's almost nothing they can militarily do about it." AGENCIES

AFP

First responders at an attack site in Petah Tikva, Israel, on Tuesday

Iran advances plan to charge toll from ships to cross Hormuz

Iran's Parliament on Monday approved an initial plan to institute a toll in the Strait of Hormuz, according to Fars, Iran's semi-official news agency. The move to charge ships in what is normally one of the world's busiest international waterways is the latest threat by Iran to impose control over it amid the monthlong war that has almost halted all traffic in the Persian Gulf.

In order for the toll to take effect, the full Iranian Parliament has to adopt the measure, according to Fars. But a unilateral act by the Iranians would not mean it is legal and could leave the country further alienated on the world stage.

Though the strait lies within the territorial waters of both Iran and Oman at its narrowest point, the Iranians effectively control the strait right now. Under maritime law, however, it is treated as an international waterway where ships are guaranteed passage.

Secretary of state Marco Rubio has called the toll plan illegal and "unacceptable". Tasnim, a publication affiliated with Iran's Revolutionary Guards, estimated such a scheme could generate about $100 billion annually. One proposed method would allow Iran to charge $2 million for each vessel passing through the strait as a "special security service." Such a service could generate about $280 million a day, according to Tasnim.

Another approach could be modelled on the fee system for transiting the Suez Canal, which is based on a vessel's cargo capacity, and is estimated to generate about $56 million a day, Tasnim reported. NYT

After Spain, now Italy denies US access to its base, Rubio slams Nato for non-cooperation

▶Continued from P1

India, which is the world's second largest importer of crude after China, is heavily dependent on supplies from the Gulf. The disruption in Hormuz — and the unsubtle pressure to shift to US energy — poses multiple challenges for New Delhi, including higher costs, logistical constraints, and a diminution of India's strategic autonomy that has traditionally diversified suppliers to avoid overdependence.

But it is the European nations that are in Trump's immediate line of fire for declining, some of them bluntly, to support what even domestic critics say is an unprecedented show of American hubris. The UK — traditionally Washington's closest military partner — has stopped short of joining offensive operations and restricted the use of its facilities for combat missions, reflecting both domestic opposition and strategic caution.

France has reportedly denied overflight permissions for operations linked to the conflict and even blocked airspace for the transfer of US weapons in support of Israeli operations. Italy has denied American aircraft access to the strategic Sigonella airbase in Sicily — a critical Nato node for Mediterranean operations — citing legal constraints and lack of parliamentary approval.

Spain has gone further still, with Madrid not only refusing use of joint bases but also closing its airspace to US military flights involved in the war, forcing American aircraft to reroute and complicating supply chains. Spanish PM Pedro Sanchez has described the war as "illegal", positioning Madrid as the most vocal European critic of Washington's campaign.

The rebuff has enraged Trump, who on Tuesday singled out the UK and France for being unhelpful, and warned, "The USA will REMEMBER!!!"

The "go get your own oil" remark, aimed particularly at Britain, reflects a shift in US posture: from security guarantor to transactional supplier. It is a message that resonates poorly across the world, particularly in Europe, where leaders view the war as a unilateral American venture with destabilising global consequences.

President Trump minions also flagged Europe's non-cooperation. From secretary of state Marco Rubio: "If Nato is just about us defending Europe if they're attacked, but them denying us basing rights when we need them, then that's not a very good arrangement".

France said it was "surprised" by Trumps remarks. "France has not changed its position since day one," President Emmanual Macron's office said. Public opinion underscores the shift, even as Trump and his sidekicks are all over the place with inconsistent messaging, sometimes threatening to expand the war, and sometimes indicating they will simply pull back leaving Iran in control of Hormuz; sometimes insisting Iran is decimated and other times claiming Iran still has the ability to strike.

UK to send more def kit, troops to W Asia

Britain plans to send additional air defence equipment and troops to help its allies in West Aisa, defence minister John Healey said on Tuesday as he visited Saudi Arabia, Qatar and Bahrain. Healey held talks with allies where they discussed the Strait of Hormuz and further UK-Gulf co-operation on regional security, Britain's ministry of defence said. UK will deploy Sky Sabre, a ground-based air defence system used by the UK army, in Saudi Arabia, statement said. Healey said that UK troops will help install, train, and operate the new air defence systems, with nearly 1,000 soldiers expected to be deployed to help "defend the skies and reinforce air defences". REUTERS

China and Pak outline 5-point plan to end war

Beijing: China and Pakistan called on Tuesday for an immediate end to the war in West Asia, and for peace talks as soon as possible, as they agreed to boost their cooperation on Iran. The two countries outlined a joint initiative "for restoring peace and stability in the Gulf and Middle East (West Asia)", after a visit from Pakistani officials to Beijing.

Pakistan's ministry said the two sides had agreed on a five-point plan, starting with the "immediate cessation of hostilities" and the "start of peace talks as soon as possible". The plan also calls for an end to attacks on civilians and non-military targets, such as energy infrastructure and desalination plants. Shipping lanes should be secured, allowing "the safe passage of commercial ships", it added. AFP

When do attacks on civilian infra amount to war crimes?

The Hague: The widening Iran conflict has led to airstrikes on infrastructure across West Asia and threats to target oil facilities, power production sites and desalination plants that supply civilians, which some experts say could amount to war crimes if carried out.

What does int'l law say?

The 1949 Geneva Conventions on humanitarian conduct in war prohibit attacks on sites considered essential for civilians: "In no event shall actions against these objects be taken which may be expected to leave the civilian population with such inadequate food or water as to cause its starvation or force its movement."

Have there been warrants issued for attacks in the past?

The International Criminal Court cited attacks on critical infrastructure in Ukraine, in arrest warrants it issued for political and military leaders in Russia. In July 2024, the ICC accused Sergei Shoigu, the former Russian defence minister, and leading Russian general Valery Gerasimov, of war crimes for targeting Ukraine's power grid in the middle of winter. In the ICC's arrest warrant for Israeli PM Benjamin Netanyahu, judges "considered that there are reasonable grounds to believe that both individuals deprived the civilian population in Gaza of objects indispensable to their survival, including food, water, and medicine and medical supplies, as well as fuel and power."

Israel also denies war crimes allegations and says it has targeted militants in Gaza and Lebanon in self defence against an existential threat.

Could these be 'def targets'?

The Geneva Conventions say that parties involved in military conflict must distinguish between "civilian objects and military objectives", and that attacks on civilian objects are forbidden. This prohibition is also codified in the Rome Statute of the ICC, which is a court of last resort for 125 countries, but which does not include major powers such as Russia, the US and China. The Geneva Conventions say some infrastructure owned and used by civilians can count as a military objective, but only "objects which by their nature, location, purpose or use make an effective contribution to military action", and whose destruction or capture "offers a definite military advantage".

Where to prosecute?

A case on the current conflict is unlikely to end up in a war crimes court any time soon. None of the Gulf states, Israel or Iran are members of the ICC. There is no other institution with clear jurisdiction over alleged war crimes in the region. Division within the UNSC, which can send cases to The Hague, means it is also unlikely that a case on the conflict is referred to the court. REUTERS

Getty Images

A drone attack destroys a residential building in eastern Tehran on Tuesday

'A Throne Fit for a King': Sculpture satirises Trump's WH upgrades

Chidanand Rajghatta | TNN

Washington: In a city where monuments are usually carved in stone or cast in bronze, a new installation has gone where no presidential tribute has gone before: into the toilet. A 10-foot golden toilet commode — titled with regal restraint "A Throne Fit for a King" — has appeared on the National Mall, courtesy of the guerrilla art collective known only as Secret Handshake. It is, according to its snarky creators, a tribute to Trump's priorities.

The sculpture satirises the realtor-turned-president's much-discussed White House renovations — particularly his decision to renovate the Lincoln bathroom and build a ballroom while the nation is wrestling with inflation. A plaque at the site helpfully explains the artistic vision, praising Trump as a "visionary who looked down, saw a problem, and painted it gold."

If the golden throne feels like a punchline, it's only the latest in what has become a full-blown comedic universe of Trump satire. Earlier this month, Secret Handshake unveiled a towering sculpture depicting Trump and the late Jeffrey Epstein reenacting the iconic ship bow scene from the movie Titanic.

Dubbed "King of the World," the piece cast Trump in the Leonardo DiCaprio role — arms outstretched, wind in his trademark hair — while Epstein played his Kate Winslet counterpart. Before that came "Best Friends Forever," a statue of Trump and Epstein skipping hand-in-hand like toddlers at a playdate.

Taken together, the installations reveal something larger than any single sculpture: the meme-fication of a President who is the butt of jokes which are now turning into a joke of butts. He is, depending on whom you ask, either a misunderstood genius of branding or a walking meme template with a spray tan. His critics see him as the ultimate satirical muse — a man whose real-life pronouncements, requiring artists only to nudge reality a few inches further into absurdity.

The potty installation also includes rolls of toilet paper branded with Secret Handshake's name — because in modern political discourse, even the punchlines come with merch. Trump critics and his supporters snap selfies on it. Critics applaud the installations as sharp political commentary. Supporters assert that he triggers the libs so hard they spend millions on golden toilets just to own him. Some are selling bootleg T-shirts featuring the toilet with the slogan "Even His Crap Is Classy."

AFP

A ROYAL FLUSH

US journalist kidnapped in Baghdad

Baghdad: An American journalist was kidnapped on Tuesday in Baghdad and Iraqi security forces are pursuing her captors, Iraqi officials said. Reuters identified the kidnapped journalist as Shelly Kittleson, quoting police sources. The Iraqi interior ministry confirmed that a foreign journalist had been kidnapped, without giving more details about the scribe.

Two Iraqi security officials, who spoke on condition of anonymity, said the kidnapped journalist was a woman with US citizenship. They said that two cars were involved in the kidnapping, one of which crashed and was apprehended, while a second car fled the scene with the journalist.

The interior ministry said in a statement that an operation had been launched to track down the kidnappers, "acting on intelligence and through field operations". One suspect was arrested, the statement added. It was not clear if the kidnapping was related to the war in Iran. A spokesperson for the US embassy in Baghdad declined to comment. AGENCIES

Nepal's new govt pledges apology to dalits within 15 days for discrimination

Vishant.Agarwala
@timesofindia.com

Nepal's new govt said it would issue a "formal state apology" to dalits and other historically excluded communities within 15 days under Prime Minister **Balendra Shah**'s 100-point reform agenda, in what activists described as a historic acknowledgment of generations of caste-based discrimination, exclusion and denial of opportunity. The proposed apology is to be accompanied by measures on social justice, inclusive restoration and historical reconciliation.

The agenda said: "We will acknowledge the injustice, discrimination and deprivation of opportunities inflicted on dalits and historically marginalised communities by the state, society and policy structures, and prepare the basis for social justice, inclusive restoration and historical reconciliation." It added that a reform-oriented programme would be announced too.

The promise has drawn attention in a country where dalits make up about 13%-14% of the population but continue to face entrenched exclusion despite constitutional guarantees and laws against caste-based discrimination and untouchability. Activists said nearly 42% of dalits lived below the poverty line, literacy remained below the national average, and representation in key institutions stayed disproportionately low.

Saraswati Nepali, president of the Dalit Society Development Forum in Baitadi, recalled that as a child she was not allowed to drink from the same water jar as her classmates and had to walk home for water because she was dalit. "The state's apology will be like a balm for our wounds," she said. "But for it to heal entirely, govt must effectively ensure all our rights. That would give us justice and ensure our dignity."

WORLD DIGEST

Nasa's countdown for 1st moon launch in 53 years begins

Nasa began the countdown Monday for humanity's first launch to the moon in 53 years. The 32-storey Space Launch System rocket is poised to blast off Wednesday evening with four astronauts. After a day in orbit around Earth, their Orion capsule will propel them to the moon and back. There are no stops — just a quick U-turn around the moon. The nearly 10-day flight will end with a splashdown in the Pacific. Managers said the rocket is doing well following the latest round of repairs. Forecasters said the weather should cooperate. Unlike Apollo, which sent only men to the moon from 1968 through 1972, Artemis' debut crew includes a woman, person of colour and a non-US citizen.

Imprisoned Iranian Nobel Peace laureate may have suffered a heart attack

Supporters of Iran's imprisoned Nobel Peace Prize laureate Narges Mohammadi say she may have suffered a heart attack. Mohammadi's legal team, accompanied by one family member, visited her in Zanjan Prison on March 29, according to a statement Tuesday from the Free Narges Coalition campaign. "Her general health was extremely poor, and she appeared pale and weak with significant weight loss," it said. It cited her fellow inmates as saying she was found unconscious in her bed with her eyes rolled back on March 24. "Despite this medical emergency, and evident indications of a heart attack, authorities refused to transfer Mohammadi to a hospital or allow her to visit a specialist," the statement said.

A Florida airport to be renamed after Trump

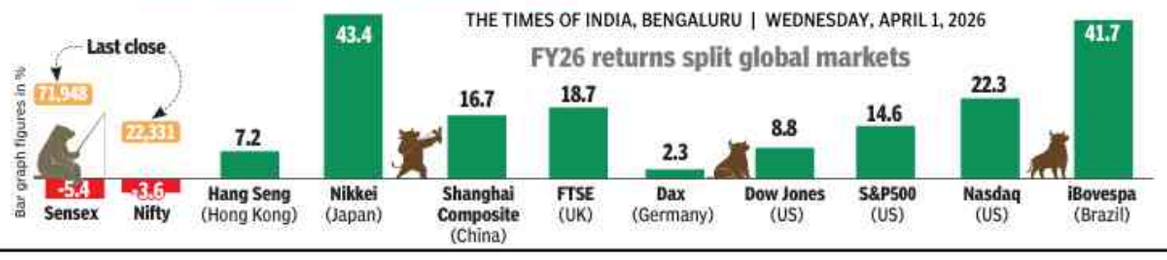
A Florida airport was cleared to be renamed after President Trump Monday. Florida governor Ron DeSantis signed a bill allowing Palm Beach International Airport to be renamed the President Donald J. Trump International Airport. The change is set to take place in July, formally rebranding the airport near Trump's Mar-a-Lago estate.

TIMES BUSINESS

THE TIMES OF INDIA, BENGALURU | WEDNESDAY, APRIL 1, 2026

War widens global, Indian FY26 returns gap

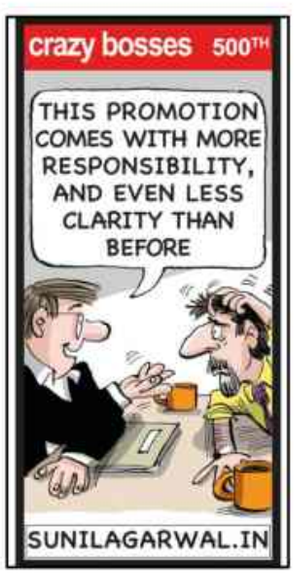
Despite steady domestic economic momentum, Indian equities underperformed global peers in FY26, while precious metals and select international indices delivered significantly stronger returns for investors



Updated as per 08.40PM IST March 31, 2026
Source: BSE, NSE, ETIG and Yahoo Finance

Novo Nordisk cuts semaglutide prices by 36-48%

New Delhi: As competition heats up in anti-obesity market, Novo Nordisk India has slashed semaglutide prices ranging from 36-48% on its injections. The reduction comes at a time when many generic companies launched affordable weight-loss shots — some nearly 90% cheaper after the expiry of Novo's patent on semaglutide on March 20. Effective April 1, price of starting dose of Ozempic is likely to be reduced by 36%, while that of starting dose of Wegovy mau be cut by 48%. TNN



Gnani.ai raises $10 million to expand globally

Bengaluru: Gnani.ai, a Bengaluru-based enterprise voice AI startup, has raised $10 million in a funding round led by Aavishkaar Capital as it looks to expand globally and strengthen its generative AI capabilities. Founded by Ganesh Gopalan and Ananth Nagaraj in 2016, the company processes over 30 million voice interactions daily across more than 12 languages. It serves over 200 enterprise customers, including Fortune 500 firms. The fresh capital will be used to accelerate global expansion, build multilingual and industry-specific solutions, and strengthen engineering and product teams, the company said. TNN

Magicbricks, SPA tie up for research

New Delhi: Magicbricks has announced a strategic partnership with the School of Planning and Architecture (SPA Delhi) to bring sharper, research-led clarity to the country's evolving real estate landscape.

"By combining large-scale consumer demand signals with academic and spatial planning frameworks, the partnership seeks to create insights that are not just data-rich, but contextually meaningful," Magicbricks said. The partnership seeks to develop joint research reports, thematic white papers, and in-depth studies on housing and urban trends. "While not directly influencing policy, the insights are expected to contribute meaningfully to broader urban planning and development conversations in India," it said.

The one-year engagement will follow a continuous knowledge series format, with a sustained focus on housing and urban development. TNN

RBI extends US tariff relief as Iran strife disrupts trade

Breathing Room For Exporters: Credit Tenure Runs Till June 30

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Mumbai: In a move that will buy more time for exporters, the Reserve Bank of India extended a pandemic-style leniency on trade finance, allowing pre- and post-shipment export credit to run for up to 450 days for all disbursements made until June 30, 2026. The measure, effective immediately, is meant to cushion firms grappling with snarled logistics and delayed payments as conflict in West Asia disrupts global shipping arteries.

The decision builds on relief measures unveiled in Nov 2025, when the RBI first stretched the credit window from 270 to 450 days for loans sanctioned up to March 31, 2026. That earlier intervention responded chiefly to a sudden spike in American tariffs, which squeezed exporters' margins. The latest extension reflects a shift in the nature of the shock. Where tariffs threatened to dent competitiveness, war is dislocating trade itself. The confrontation involving America, Israel and Iran has forced vessels to reroute, inflated freight costs and lengthened transit times, leaving consignments stranded and payments deferred. Bankers said that the relief measures were crucial as bulk of the exporting entities are MSMEs, the main drivers of employment and investment.

450-DAY WINDOW

- Move responds to supply-chain disruptions from West Asia conflict, has delayed shipments, raised freight costs and slowed payments
- It builds on a Nov 2025 relief that expanded the credit window from 270 to 450 days
- Longer credit tenors ease working-capital stress, especially for MSME exporters in sectors like textiles, engineering goods and chemicals
- Relief remains temporary and targeted: lenders must follow prudential norms, even as exporters get 15 months to realise and repatriate proceeds

For exporters, the consequences are acute. Industries such as textiles, engineering goods and chemicals which are deeply reliant on West Asian corridors, face elongated working-capital cycles and uncertain cash flows. By allowing lenders to extend credit tenors, the RBI is smoothing a liquidity crunch that might otherwise choke viable firms. The circular applies across banks, non-bank financiers and other regulated institutions, which may grant the longer tenor subject to their own risk controls. It also permits lenders to square off existing packing-credit facilities, where goods are yet to be shipped, using alternative sources, including domestic sales or proceeds from substitute export orders. Such flexibility acknowledges a reality in which shipments are delayed or cancelled outright.

The central bank has, however, stopped short of forbearance. Prudential norms remain in place, and lenders are expected to monitor exposures . The relief is temporary and targeted, not an opportunity to evergreen stressed loans. Alongside this, the RBI has retained an earlier concession allowing exporters 15 months, rather than nine, to realise and repatriate export proceeds. Together, these aim to keep trade flowing and balance sheets intact until geopolitics loosens its grip on supply chains.

War weighs on IPO-led investor exits

Asmita.Dey@timesofindia.com

Mumbai: A prolonged West Asia war is slowing down the pace of IPOs, delaying exits for investors as companies rethink timelines to launch public issues amid a volatile market. In 2025, IPOs drove nearly 40% of public market exits for venture capital (VC) and private equity (PE) growth investors (covers select PE investments), helped by a higher number of listings worth more than $100 million, a joint report by Bain & Company and The Indian Venture and Alternate Capital Association (IVCA) said. In all, public markets led about 67% of total exits worth $7 billion last year while non-IPO public market exits declined by about 22% in value as investors prioritised liquidity events with better price discovery. "There will be a slowdown in the pace of exits. Hold periods will start to get a bit longer as there will be a mismatch (in terms of market pricing and valuations) between what buyers and sellers are expecting," Prabhav Kashyap, partner at Bain & Company told **TOI**. The study covers VC and PE investments in tech deals only.

Walmart's PhonePe that was all set for a $1.3 billion IPO sometime in April has postponed its listing as war-jittered investors, it is understood, seemed reluctant to ascribe it a valuation of $15 billion the firm had been targeting. Earlier in the week, XED Executive Development, India's first gift city IPO withdrew the issue due to weak markets. "Timing of exit through IPOs will be revisited," Kashyap said. With markets taking a beating since the war, India's IPO market has taken a hit after a stellar run last year. Sensex and Nifty ended FY26, down 5.4% and 3.6% respectively.

After a lacklustre 2025 that saw overall VC-PE funding drop by 18% year-on-year, the war has cast a cloud over deal making this year too as investors turn cautious with capital deployment despite sitting on a substantial pool of funds. Fund-raising by investors touched nearly $5.4 billion in 2025, roughly double of that of 2024 levels, driven by a surge in funds worth over $100 million and a 35% increase in average fund size. "There is always some slowdown that happens with respect to deal making during any volatility," Kashyap said, adding that there could be some amount of distress deals and down rounds. "Investors are currently prioritising risk assessment for portfolio companies (impacted by war) and figuring out action plans," Kashyap said.

COS RETHINK LISTING TIMELINES

India's biologics dream hits Chinese wall

Rupali.Mukherjee
@timesofindia.com

New Delhi: Indian firms hoping to ride the global biologics boom are finding the path far tougher than expected, as China tightens its grip further on biotech supply chains. Recent data suggests Chinese companies have bagged more than half of several recent project deals from US biotech companies, underscoring the challenge for Indian players trying to break into complex biologics.

Unlike generics, where India leveraged cost efficiency and scale to capture global markets, biologics demand deep R&D capabilities, sophisticated manufacturing infrastructure and specialised talent, raising both entry barriers and financial risks, analysts say.

Over the last few years, China has rapidly emerged as a major force in biotech, with biologics accounting for about 42% of its new drug approvals in 2023, up from 9% in 2015, cementing its position in global supply chains for complex niche biologics. Against this backdrop, Indian companies will need to recalibrate strategy if they are to carve out a meaningful share in advanced therapies.

K V Subramaniam, president, Reliance Life Sciences, said: "In last seven years, China has come from behind and forged way ahead of India in biopharmaceuticals, driven by mission-driven govt policy, fast-track regulatory approvals and clearance of a huge drug approval backlog."

"Recent project flows suggest Chinese companies have been able to secure more than half of their new orders from US-biotech companies, indicating Chinese companies' operational scale, cost competitiveness and established capabilities remain unmatched," said Tausif Shaikh, India analyst pharma and healthcare at BNP Paribas.

Market research firm, IQVIA estimates 118 biologics are losing patent protection in the US (2025–2034), representing a ~$232B global biosimilar market. India's biosimilar exports, currently around $0.8 billion, are projected to grow five-fold to $4.2 billion by 2030, and then potentially to $30–35 billion by 2047.

Shreehas Tambe, CEO & MD, Biocon says, said, "India's biosimilars industry is at a pivotal stage — the early years were defined by cost efficiency and established India as a reliable producer of high-quality generic medicines at scale. The next phase will evolve from cost leadership to capability leadership."

"Though India has the broad capability, it has to address gaps such as cell line engineering depth, legal/IP plus market access firepower in the US, manufacturing at commercial scale of newer modalities from hybrid science like cell and gene therapies," said Suresh Subramanian, national lifesciences leader, EY-Parthenon India.

Cornering Lion's share

- WuXi Biologics, China's largest biologics contract development and manufacturing organisation and third-largest globally, secured 86 new projects in first half of calendar 2025, with over half coming from the US
- Chinese innovators are increasingly attracting record deals from Big Pharma. Value soared to over $36bn in CY2023, a 13-fold increase over eight years

Rising AI demand drives shift to fractional GPU model

Shilpa Phadnis & Supriya Roy | TNN

Bengaluru: Fractional GPUs are reshaping AI economics as demand for compute rises. The growing need for AI workloads, combined with the high cost of GPU infrastructure, is driving a shift in how companies access computing power. At the centre of this transition is the emergence of fractional GPUs — a model that allows users to rent portions of high-performance GPUs instead of entire units.

Naresh Singh, senior director analyst at Gartner, said fractional GPUs are particularly relevant in emerging markets such as India. "They reduce cost barriers for GPU-as-a-service offerings and enable SMBs and startups to access advanced systems that may otherwise be too expensive or unnecessary in early stages. They also improve utilisation through granular orchestration, helping maximise the number of tokens processed per GPU," he said. Karan Kirpalani, chief product officer at Neysa, said a fractional GPU partitions a single GPU into smaller, isolated units, allowing multiple users or workloads to run concurrently. "This improves utilisation, reduces costs for smaller workloads, and enables more efficient use of high-value GPU resources," he said.

The rise of fractional GPUs is part of a broader evolution in AI infrastructure. "We are seeing two big trends — fractional GPUs and neoclouds," said Ray Wang, CEO of Constellation Research. "Fractional GPUs lower entry costs for inference and fine-tuning, while neoclouds provide dedicated bare-metal GPUs for compute-intensive workloads." These neocloud platforms also offer flexible contracts, faster provisioning, and specialised infrastructure configurations. Service providers also benefit from this shift. By slicing GPUs using techniques such as time-slicing or hardware-based partitioning like Nvidia's Multi-Instance GPU (MIG), they can maximise utilisation and process more workloads per chip.

Fractional GPUs lower AI compute costs by enabling shared access to high-performance infra, helping startups and SMBs scale workloads efficiently without investing in full GPU capacity

Investors say fractional GPUs are not just a technical innovation but also a key enabler of more sustainable startup economics. "For frontier model development, you need powerful GPU clusters," said Ganapathy Subramaniam, founding managing partner at Yali Capital. "But many startups are fine-tuning models rather than building from scratch, and fractional GPUs help them operate within budget."

This shift is also encouraging more efficient AI development — using compute more selectively rather than relying purely on scale. Beneath it lies a deeper transformation in the AI infrastructure stack. While hardware providers continue to focus on building and maintaining data centres, differentiation is increasingly shifting to software platforms that abstract complexity.

"Developers don't want a server; they want an endpoint," said Gaurav Sharma, CEO and CTO of GPU marketplace io.net. "They want to consume compute per workload without worrying about the underlying infrastructure."

India staff get sudden Oracle layoff mails

▸ Continued from page 1

Like their peers in the US, several Oracle India employees were caught off guard by early-morning layoff notifications, with some receiving emails from leadership as early as 6am or late evening in India.

According to an internal email to affected employees, reported by Business Insider, the company said it had "made the decision to eliminate your role as part of a broader organisational change", adding that the day of notification would be the employee's last working day.

Employees have been asked to immediately provide a personal email address to receive follow-up communication, including FAQs and separation-related documents. The company clarified these email IDs will be used solely for correspondence related to severance and transition support.

CBIC kicks off reforms to push e-comm exports

New Delhi: CBIC has rolled out reforms to strengthen and streamline e-commerce exports and courier-based imports and exports from April 1. Steps include removal of Rs 10 lakh value cap per consignment on courier exports, a streamlined framework for handling returned and rejected parcels and a legally backed Return to Origin process for uncleared shipments, aimed at enhancing ease of doing business, reduce logistics inefficiencies and strengthen India's global export competitiveness, particularly for MSMEs, and start-ups. TNN

Gold loans lead new credit, retail book hits ₹16L cr

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Mumbai: Gold loans have emerged as the top product in new originations and the second-largest retail credit book in India at Rs 16 lakh crore, trailing only home loans at Rs 44 lakh crore, according to credit bureau TransUnion Cibil, even as consumer durable loans, largely for mobile phones, have become the main entry point for first-time borrowers, replacing two-wheelers and priority sector loans.

According to TransUnion Cibil's credit market indicator report, credit markets improved in the third quarter of FY26. Demand rose on the back of GST rate cuts and festive season spending, while a sharp increase in gold loans boosted credit supply as gold prices surged. Lenders improved asset quality through a shift towards higher ticket loans, seasoned borrowers and those with stronger credit scores, resulting in lower delinquencies.

Delinquencies declined across most retail segments. Unsecured categories including credit cards, personal loans and consumer durables saw improvement, while secured segments such as home loans and auto loans also reported lower delinquencies. Personal loan delinquencies have declined steadily since Sept 2025, while home loan delinquencies remained stable at low levels of 0.7% to 0.8%.

Some segments continue to show relatively higher stress levels. Commercial vehicles recorded delinquency levels of around 2%, construction equipment stood at 1.2%, and micro loan against property remained elevated at around 3%, although these levels have remained stable.

Commenting on the outlook for the fourth quarter of FY26, Jain said that after the festive season, demand has "normalised" in Jan and Feb 2026. Early indicators for Jan show continued improvement in delinquency rates, suggesting that the credit market indicator may strengthen further in the final quarter of the fiscal year.

In retail credit market, gold loans account for nearly one-third of all new loan originations. As gold prices doubled, ticket sizes for gold loans increased by 1.8 times.

CREDIT DEMAND ROSE IN Q3FY26: REPORT

Product Type	3M Ended Sep 2025 (%)	3M Ended Sep 2024 (%)
Consumer Durable Loan	19	-3
Gold Loan	**16**	**11**
Personal Loan	10	11
Auto Loan	6	-1
Home Loan	1	-6
Two-Wheeler Loan	1	5
Credit Card	-15	-22

Source: TransUnion CIBIL

US stocks move higher, recover some losses

New York: US stocks are jolting higher Tuesday and recovering a chunk of their losses because of the war with Iran. The S&P 500 leaped 2.3% and is heading toward its best day since the war began, a day after it fell more than 9% below its all-time high set early this year.

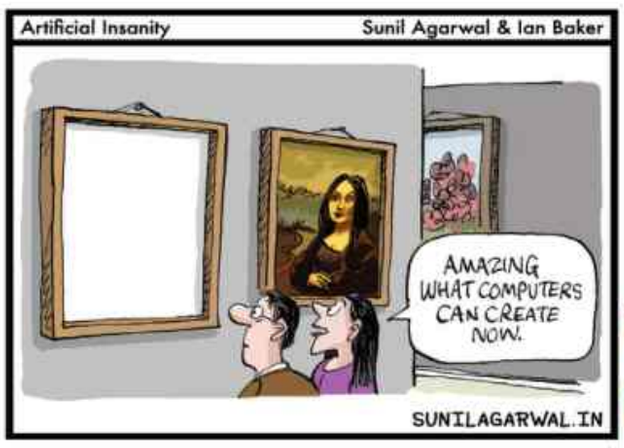
The Dow Jones Industrial Average was up 841 points, or 1.9%, as of 12:59 pm Eastern time, and the Nasdaq composite was 3.2% higher. The rebound came as movements for oil prices took some pressure off Wall Street. The price for a barrel of Brent crude oil, the international standard, fell 2.1% to $105.13. Benchmark US crude fell 0.7% to $102. AGENCIES

IS **AI RESHAPING** THE WORLD

AI IS MOVING INTO THE ACTION ERA

Most companies are still treating AI like spectators watching a match – analysing, predicting, but rarely acting. The future I envision ends this passive era, replacing it with smart agents embedded in real workflows. Imagine AI agents proactively diagnosing supply-chain bottlenecks before products stall or spotting financial fraud while the transaction occurs not after losses pile up. This new breed of applied AI doesn't rely on massive, generic language models trained on the internet. Instead, it's built on lean, trusted data specific to each business, enabling precise, proactive decisions. In healthcare, that means interventions triggered in real-time, not after patient deterioration. For manufacturers, it's machinery that calls for maintenance hours before a costly breakdown. The next wave of AI belongs not to those with the biggest models, but to those who stop watching AI and put it decisively into action. The time for passive observation is over.

Varun Babbar | MD AND INDIA HEAD, QLIK



India moves beyond software, ONE ROBOT AT A TIME

Robotics firms are building and exporting machines for the world

Akhil.George@timesofindia.com

It has long been common to see LinkedIn posts from US-based Indian engineers lamenting the lack of opportunities to work on hardware back home, arguing that most roles remain confined to software. That perception, however, is beginning to shift, thanks in part to a new wave of robotics startups.

From warehouse automation to adaptive factory systems and cutting-edge machine vision, firms such as Addverb, Unbox Robotics, Ati Motors and CynLr are collectively shaping what could become one of the country's most consequential deep-tech ecosystems.

"Indians are getting serious about robotics and even getting manufacturing done here, rather than just focusing on software," Pramod Ghadge, CEO of Unbox Robotics, said. His company builds swarm-based robotic systems that automate sorting and order consolidation in warehouses – a critical bottleneck in e-commerce logistics. The idea emerged from his time at Flipkart, where he saw first-hand how rigid and capital-intensive existing automation systems were.

Unbox's approach is to deploy fleets of small, coordinated robots that can scale within the same warehouse footprint. "You can start with a 20-robot system today and then add more robots in the same layout as volumes grow," Pramod explained. The company has already deployed hundreds of robots across India and Europe, with most of its revenue coming from overseas – a reflection of where demand currently lies.

That global demand is a recurring theme across the ecosystem. Indian robotics firms are often building for the world first. Pramod pointed out that while there is demand in India, automation typically makes economic sense only at scale, and in Europe, even mid-sized companies can justify such investments.

If Unbox represents flexibility in logistics, Ati Motors is focused on industrial environments where conditions are dynamic and unpredictable. Its autonomous mobile robots (AMRs) are designed to handle material movement in factories – tasks that are "dirty, dull and dangerous", as Pallab Sarkar, its VP of software engineering, put it.

Ati's differentiation lies in what it calls a "physical AI" layer. "You can innovate to a certain level with hardware, but when you try to perceive, learn and adapt based on the environment, intelligence comes into the picture," Pallab said. This intelligence allows robots to navigate changing factory layouts, avoid obstacles and optimise routes in real time – capabilities that are increasingly essential as manufacturing shifts towards more flexible, software-defined operations.

> There is a huge surge of interest in robotics driven by physical AI. Earlier, robots were built for fixed, repetitive tasks, but now they are becoming more adaptive and capable of handling variation. We are already manufacturing around 10,000 robots a year, and the next phase is about building general-purpose systems that can perform multiple tasks across environments, both in industry and beyond. – **Sangeet Kumar** | CEO & CO-FOUNDER, ADDVERB

> Robotics is entering a new phase because of physical AI. Hardware alone can only take you so far; real value comes when robots can perceive, learn and adapt in dynamic environments. With advances in edge computing and AI models, what was once impossible is now feasible. This is where India has an advantage, combining strong software capability with a growing manufacturing base to build intelligent robotic systems. **Pallab Sarkar** | VP – SOFTWARE ENGINEERING, ATI MOTORS

> We are at an inflection point where India is moving beyond software and getting serious about building and manufacturing robotics systems here. The ecosystem is still maturing, especially on the hardware and supply chain side, but the intent is strong. With the right focus on reliability, cost and scalability, companies like ours can build world-class products in India and deploy them globally. **Pramod Ghadge** | CEO, UNBOX ROBOTICS

> The biggest gap in robotics today is not precision but intuition. Robots can repeat tasks with extreme accuracy, but they struggle when the environment changes. Humans, even as babies, can adapt instantly without prior knowledge. Our focus is to bring that kind of object intelligence to machines, so they can handle unfamiliar objects and situations, making them truly usable for complex, real-world manufacturing problems. **Gokul NA** | CO-FOUNDER, CYNLR

The rise of such capabilities is tied to broader technological shifts. Edge computing has become powerful enough to run sophisticated models on-device, while advances in AI have made real-time perception feasible. "What was not possible 20 years back can now be done in a palm-sized computer," Pallab noted.

Inflection Point In Robotics

This convergence of AI and robotics is what many in the industry describe as a turning point. Sangeet Kumar, CEO & co-founder of Addverb, said there is a huge amount of interest in robotics today because of the rapidly evolving capabilities from fixed, pre-programmed machines to systems that can handle variability and learn from their environments. "Earlier, robots were designed to perform one specific task repeatedly. Now, with advances in AI, they can handle variation – different shapes, sizes and conditions – without needing everything to be perfectly structured," he said.

Addverb's scale reflects how quickly the market is evolving. The company currently manufactures around 10,000 robots annually across different form factors, even as it has built capacity to produce up to 100,000 units a year. Sangeet said the ambition is to move towards more general-purpose systems. "A generalist robot should be able to perform multiple activities – whether it is moving goods, assembling components or handling new, unfamiliar tasks," he said.

The challenges remain formidable. Building robots is not just about writing code; it is about integrating sensors, actuators, power systems and compute into reliable machines that can operate in the real world.

CynLr is tackling one of the most fundamental challenges in robotics: perception and manipulation. Co-founder Gokul NA describes the problem in almost philosophical terms. Robots today can repeat tasks with extreme precision, but struggle when anything changes in their environment. Humans, by contrast, adapt instinctively. "Robots lack the intuition of even a human baby," he said.

CynLr's approach is to build what it calls an "object intelligence" stack – a system that allows machines to understand and interact with objects in a more human-like way. Instead of relying purely on pre-trained data, its robots learn on the fly, using sensory inputs to figure out how to grasp and manipulate unfamiliar objects. "A baby need not know that it's a pen, it will simply go and grab it," Gokul explained.

This focus on intelligence rather than brute-force data reflects a broader divergence in how companies are approaching the problem. While some rely heavily on simulation and large datasets, others are experimenting with more adaptive, real-time learning models. The field, as Gokul put it, is still too early for any single approach to dominate.

Issues In Manufacturing & Research

There's also the question of manufacturing these robots. Most companies still depend on imported components for critical parts such as sensors and specialised electronics. Ati Motors sources key navigation components like LiDAR from abroad, even as the electric vehicle ecosystem has improved local availability of motors and related hardware.

Unbox Robotics said only a small number of parts are directly imported, but indirect dependencies – through global suppliers operating in India – remain significant. At the same time, companies are increasingly localising production. "We are today able to do mechanical parts, batteries, PCB assembly," Pramod said.

This gradual localisation is one of the clearest signs of the ecosystem maturing. But high-quality vendors are limited, and companies often have to manage manufacturing processes closely rather than relying on a mature supply chain. Research is another area where India is still building depth. Pallab said research-led innovation needs stronger collaboration between industry and academia.

India kept JFrog running when war hit Israel

Shlomi Ben Haim, co-founder & CEO of JFrog, at an event in Bengaluru

Sujit.John@timesofindia.com

When war came to Israel on Oct 7, 2023, JFrog's India engineers did more than keep the lights on. They stepped into customer meetings for colleagues in bunkers, backed up teams hit by military call-ups, and helped the Israeli software company run during the worst conflict the country had seen in decades.

For Shlomi Ben Haim, JFrog's co-founder and CEO, that moment turned a business continuity plan from theory into proof. "In the world of a CEO, to run a company during a war is not an experience that you are inviting. But when it happens, you learn who your people are, how strong the culture is, and how aligned it is with the strategy," he said, adding that in 2025, they had their best performance ever since the company was founded in 2008.

JFrog had built an India operation well before the war, but the crisis showed what that investment meant. India was not just an offshore base. It was a full operating centre capable of supporting Asia-Pacific, North America and Europe.

JFrog had about 1,000 employees in Israel, and "around 15% of them were called by the army to be reservists," Ben Haim said. In India, it had more than 300

CUTTING-EDGE MADE IN INDIA

in India. In the middle of war, those India teams became a shock absorber for the company's business.

We met Ben Haim before Israel's war with Iran started in Feb. Our guess is, the India operation has become even more critical now.

JFrog has become hugely important in the software development lifecycle – the world's biggest banks, retailers and automotive companies use it. Its platform acts like a secure, organised warehouse for software. Imagine a team of chefs (developers) cooking a massive banquet (software). They need thousands of ingredients (code, libraries, dependencies) from different suppliers, and they need to store the finished dishes (binaries) before serving them. JFrog stores these binaries, which are composed of 0s and 1s and are the final, executable applications that machines can read, just like GitHub stores source codes, which are text-based and human-readable and which when compiled become binaries. JFrog also secures binaries, scans them and helps companies move them into production. It is therefore today a system of record for binaries, the definitive repository that guarantees which version of a binary is current, approved, and safe to use in production.

Ai Model Is A Binary

With AI, JFrog saw a massive new opportunity. "An AI model is yet another binary, another software package," Ben Haim said.

First it built native support for the emerging AI stack, especially Hugging Face, the hub for models, so that enterprises could integrate Hugging Face models into their existing software development workflows. It added security on top, as also model scanning, model protection, and model delivery. The result, Ben Haim said, is that "all the AI model lifecycle is managed in our platform."

So, JFrog today sees itself as infrastructure for the AI age. And that gives it strategic weight as AI explodes. "There is a tsunami coming," Ben Haim said, pointing to millions of new models being created every week. Agentic AI adds another twist. Software is no longer written only by humans. "There is a new persona in the field that I have to support, which are not human beings," he said. Agents generate code too, and they still need a system of record.

The customer response, he said, is urgent and top-down. Earlier waves of software change often started with developers and spread upward. AI is different. "What we see now is enterprises understand that there is a race and they cannot wait," he said. "Every board meeting, including in JFrog will start with what are we doing with AI?" Legal, HR, ERP, CRM, cost, timing, headcount. Everything is now being viewed through that lens.

Yet adoption is not frictionless. Ben Haim said customers worry about two things. The first is cost predictability. AI workloads can create compute and cloud bills that are hard to forecast. The second is model security. "We don't trust it yet," he said of what many CIOs and CISOs tell him. They worry about compliance, malicious packages, vulnerabilities and intellectual property violations.

That gives JFrog another opening. Security, Ben Haim said, is now the company's biggest growth engine.

But more recently, concerns have grown about how this security business will be impacted by the emergence of agentic code security tools like those of Anthropic, which can scan, find, and patch code vulnerabilities in real-time. We'll have to wait to see how this goes. And how JFrog responds.

> In India, we have multiple R&D teams. The majority of them work on JFrog's infrastructure, the foundation of our platform. This infrastructure is what ensures the platform's scalability, security, efficiency. A lot of the talent in India comes from a full-stack background, so they know both sides (server and application). We also have a team here that is responsible for the community interaction – all the plugins for JFrog to work with other tools. And we have very strong customer success and support engineers here; JFrog tools are very technical. **Shlomi Ben Haim**

I moved from finance to analytics to leading a global biz

Padma Srinivasan

If you had asked me as a teenager what I wanted to be, I would have said "a doctor." Life, however, had different plans and I found myself taking a very different route. What started as a pivot soon became purpose. I became a chartered accountant, and over the years, discovered that every career detour can open unexpected doors when navigated with curiosity and courage.

The early years were far from easy. Like many first-generation professionals, I started with humble beginnings, no corporate playbook, just ambition and hard work.

There were moments of doubt, long nights spent studying, and early jobs where I had to prove myself more through persistence than privilege. However, those years built my foundation of discipline, humility, and a quiet confidence that no opportunity is ever "too small" to learn from.

I began my career in the IT/ ITES/ product-oriented industry, where I learned the value of structure, scale, and process excellence. The turning point came when I transitioned to the retail sector. Retail, to me, was love at first sight – it's human, dynamic, and deeply data driven. It blends art and analytics, head, and heart. Over time, my journey moved from finance to analytics to leading global business services – a path that taught me that leadership isn't about titles, but about influence and impact.

CAREER LADDER FOR WOMEN

Every transition required reinvention. I had to unlearn, learn, and relearn constantly. From managing numbers to managing people, from solving problems to shaping solutions, I discovered that the real currency of leadership is relationships. The most fundamental part of any business is human connection – building trust, listening with empathy, and helping others thrive.

Mentorship and allyship have been the cornerstones of my growth. I've been fortunate to have my family and mentors who believed in me even before I did. I now see it as my responsibility to pay that forward to mentor emerging talent, especially women, and to remind them that asking for help is not a weakness, but wisdom in action.

Through every career phase, one constant has been the pursuit of clarity. Clarity of purpose, of values, and of "why." That clarity has helped me navigate challenges, make tough calls, and stay grounded amidst change.

Looking back, my journey has been anything but linear, it's been more like a jungle gym than a ladder. Yet, it's been rich with learning. Courage, for me, isn't about being fearless. It's about being authentic, vulnerable, and willing to start again.

If I had to leave one message for women building their careers, it would be that success is not defined by how high you climb, but by how clearly you see your purpose and how deeply you connect with people along the way. And above all, persevere with conviction and self-belief, unapologetically. No one will ever know your worth better than you do. Showing up, standing tall, and facing challenges isn't optional, it's essential.

Padma Srinivasan is head and senior director of global business services at 7-Eleven Global Solution Centre India

For top tech pay, a PhD is fast becoming essential

Akhil George & Sujit John | TNN

AI Career Edge

PhD in artificial intelligence is no longer just an academic pursuit – it can unlock some of the highest salaries in tech today. Globally, top AI PhD graduates are commanding compensation packages running into hundreds of thousands of dollars, even touching the million-dollar mark in some cases. For students weighing their options, that signals a clear shift: deep specialisation is becoming incredibly valuable in the AI era.

That is precisely why V Ramgopal Rao, vice-chancellor of BITS Pilani, believes more Indian students should consider going beyond a basic engineering degree. "There is often this misconception that doing a PhD is only to become a professor. That is far from the truth," he said, adding that advanced expertise is critical for building foundational technologies, not just business models.

But Rao's larger message goes beyond degrees. AI, he argues, is no longer a niche skill – it is becoming as fundamental as mathematics. "Irrespective of whether you are a civil engineer or a mechanical engineer, you need to start using AI in your own area," he said. The real differentiator, however, is not simply using tools. "Everybody is using AI tools... but system-level thinking – solving a real problem using AI and making it work reliably – that is what will differentiate people."

For students, that means shifting focus from passive usage to active building. Writing code or generating assignments with AI is no longer impressive. "These are skills that everybody will have," Rao noted. What matters instead is whether you can create something meaningful – a full system, a working product, or even an AI agent that solves a real-world problem.

> AI is no longer a niche skill; it is becoming foundational across every discipline. What will differentiate people is not just using tools, but solving real problems and building systems that work in real-world conditions. At the same time, no job is stable anymore. You must keep learning, understand fundamentals deeply, and adapt continuously – because those who don't evolve with technology will simply not remain relevant. **V Ramgopal Rao** | VICE-CHANCELLOR, BITS PILANI

Domain Knowledge Is Crucial

This is where domain knowledge plays a crucial role. Rao does not believe AI will replace core disciplines. Instead, it will amplify them. "If you are designing a building and you are not using AI, you would take much longer," he explained. The combination of domain expertise and AI capability can dramatically improve productivity, but only if students understand both.

At the same time, blindly relying on AI tools can be risky. Rao warned against treating them as "black boxes". Students must understand how these systems work, their limitations, and when not to trust them. This is why institutions are now introducing AI education early, even in the first year, to build foundational understanding rather than superficial familiarity.

Equally important is exposure to the real world. Academic exercises, Rao pointed out, are often based on clean datasets and well-defined problems. Industry is very different. "There are no clean datasets, the goals are ambiguous and deadlines are tight," he said. This gap is why long-term internships and industry immersion are becoming critical. Students need to experience messy data, unclear objectives, and real constraints to truly be come job-ready.

Why Soft Skills Is Key

Soft skills, often overlooked by engineering students in pursuit of grades, are also rising in importance. "Communication is becoming more important than ever," Rao said. With AI tools improving written output for everyone, the ability to clearly explain ideas – especially to non-experts – has become a key differentiator. Teamwork and interdisciplinary collaboration are equally vital, as AI projects increasingly involve people from diverse fields such as healthcare, climate science and agriculture.

Underlying all of this is a deeper shift in how careers themselves are evolving. Rao emphasised that the idea of a "safe" job is quickly becoming outdated. Roles across industries are being reshaped by AI, and the expectation now is not stability, but adaptability. "No job is stable anymore," he said, stressing that even traditionally secure professions are being redefined by automation and intelligent systems.

This has direct implications for students. It is no longer enough to qualify for a role and rely on that knowledge for years. Rao pointed out that technologies are changing so fast that what you learn in your first or second year of college may already be outdated by the time you graduate. So, continuous learning becomes the only real job security.

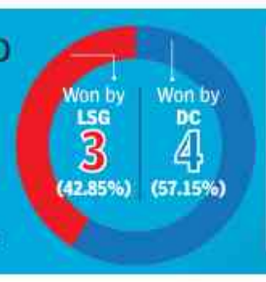
CTRL+F(IND)

LIDAR

LiDAR (Light Detection and Ranging) is a sensing technology that uses laser pulses to measure distances and map surroundings in high detail. A LiDAR system emits rapid beams of light, which bounce off objects and return to the sensor. By calculating the time taken for each pulse to return, it builds precise 3D models of environments. It is widely used in autonomous vehicles, robotics, surveying and environmental monitoring. Compared with cameras or radar, LiDAR offers superior depth accuracy and performs well in varied lighting conditions, though it can be more expensive and sensitive to weather such as heavy rain or fog.

TODAY'S FACE-OFF
LSG vs DC
TV TIME 7:30 PM
STAR SPORTS / JIOHOTSTAR

PLAYED 7



LAST FIVE MATCHES
LSG L W L L L
DC W L L NR L
VENUE: LUCKNOW
ODDS
LSG 8/10
DC 5/4

TIMES SPORT IPL 2026

"WE CAN'T BOWL TO VAIBHAV AT THE STUMPS EVEN IN THE NETS. HE SMASHES EVERY BALL INTO THE STANDS. HE HAS A FEARLESS MINDSET. HE BATS IN THE NETS THE SAME WAY AS HE BATS IN THE MATCH. THE BALL WAS SWINGING, YET HE PLAYED BIG SHOTS."
—Ravindra Jadeja | RR allrounder

CONNOLLY WINS IT FOR PUNJAB

Australian Hits 72* On IPL Debut As Hosts Beat Gujarat Titans In Nervy Three-Wicket Win

Nitin Sharma

1 Cooper Connolly's knock is the highest by a Punjab batter in a successful chase vs Gujarat Titans in the IPL.

76 Runs put on by Cooper Connolly & Prabhsimran Singh is Punjab Kings' highest second wicket partnership in New Chandigarh in the IPL.

3/29 Prasidh Krishna has emulated his best bowling performance vs Punjab in the IPL. He had captured 3/29 in 2020.

Hindol.Basu@timesofindia.com

New Chandigarh: There are chases that surge, and then there are those that stutter, pause and somehow still find a way. Punjab Kings' three-wicket win over Gujarat Titans at the Maharaja Yadavindra Singh International Stadium here, belonged firmly to the latter.

At the centre of it all stood Cooper Connolly, unbeaten on 72 off 44 balls (5x4, 5x6), an innings that didn't so much dominate the night as quietly take control of it.

Connolly doesn't announce himself with theatrics. There is a certain stillness to his batting, a compactness in movement that makes even the big shots feel measured. The left-hander, who has risen through Australia's domestic circuit as a composed middle-order presence, played an innings of layers, feeling for the pitch and then expanding just when Punjab needed him to.

Early in the chase, the tempo was set by Prabhsimran Singh. His 37 off 24 balls (1x4, 4x6) was all bustle and intent. Short-arm pulls, crisp drives and a willingness to take on the new ball. Alongside Connolly, he stitched together a 76-run partnership that gave Punjab early momentum. If Connolly was the steadying factor, Prabhsimran was the early spark, ensuring the asking rate never spiralled.

Just as Punjab seemed to be cruising, Prasidh Krishna forced his way in. His spell of 3 for 29 didn't just fetch wickets, it shifted momentum towards Gujarat.

By the time Punjab entered the final overs, the equation had tightened considerably. Connolly, though, kept picking his moments. His five sixes were not acts of desperation but of calculation, each one easing the pressure just enough to keep Punjab afloat.

And then came the final twist. With the game tilting precariously and wickets in hand running thin, Xavier Bartlett walked in. His unbeaten 11 off 5 balls swung the momentum totally in Punjab's favour. At the other end, Connolly saw Punjab through with an innings that spoke more of temperament than flair.

Earlier, Gujarat never quite found their rhythm on a surface that kept asking questions. It wasn't a collapse, nor was it a free-flowing assault. Just an innings that stayed stuck in second gear for far too long.

Shubman Gill began with assurance, stroking his way to a fluent 39 (off 27b; 6x4), while Jos Buttler, measured but watchful, made 38 (off 33b; 3x54, 2x6). Together, they gave Gujarat Titans a steady start, adding early runs without taking undue risks.

The Powerplay moved along smoothly, and for a brief period, it seemed like Gujarat were setting up for a big total. But the surface had other ideas.

There was a subtle grip in the pitch, just enough to make timing inconsistent. Punjab pacer Vijaykumar Vyshak recognised it quickly. Bowling hard lengths into the wicket, he forced the batters to generate their own pace. His spell of 3 for 34 didn't just fetch wickets; it slowed the innings down, over by over.

Gill, who looked the most comfortable of the lot, fell at a crucial moment, unable to push on after getting set. That dismissal shifted the tone. Gujarat weren't collapsing, but they weren't progressing either.

If Vyshak applied the squeeze, Yuzvendra Chahal tightened it further. The leg-spinner was clever with his variations, finishing with 2 for 28. He accounted for Buttler, who had struggled to break free, and kept the middle overs under control with his changes of pace and flight.

Glenn Phillips tried to change the narrative. His 25 (off 17b; 1x4, 1x6) came with intent hinted at acceleration. But even he couldn't sustain it.

SCOREBOARD

GT: S Sudharsan c Iyer b Jansen 13, S Gill c Connolly b Chahal 39, J Butler c Bartlett b Chahal 38, G Phillips c Jansen b Vyshak 25, W Sundar c Arshdeep b Vyshak 18, S Khan c Arshdeep b Vyshak 4; **Extras: (lb2, w11, nb1) 14; Total: (6 wkts) 162; FoW:** 1-37, 2-83, 3-119, 4- 129, 5-144, 6-150; **Bowling:** Arshdeep 4-0-42-0; Bartlett 4-0-36-0; Jansen 4-0-20-1; Vyshak 4-0-34-3; Chahal 4-0-28-2.

PBKS: P Arya c Ashok b Rabada 7, P Singh c Krishna b Rashid 37, C Connolly not out 72, S Iyer c Sundar b Krishna 18, N Wadhera c Gill b Sundar 3, S Singh c Butler b Krishna 4, M Stoinis c Rashid b Krishna 0, M Jansen c Gill b Ashok 9, X Bartlett not out 11; **Extras: (w4) 4; Total: (7 wkts, 19.1 overs) 165; FoW:** 1-7, 2-83, 3-110, 4- 113, 5-118, 6-118,7-144; **Bowling:** Siraj 2-0-15-0; Rabada 3-0-34-1; Ashok 3-0-31-1; Rashid 4-0-29-1; Sundar 3.1-0-27-1; Krishna 4-0-29-3.

Results: PBKS won by 3 wickets

Pant in focus as LSG open against Delhi

Fazal Khan | TNN

Lucknow: As Lucknow Super Giants gear up to face Delhi Capitals here Wednesday, the narrative writes itself.

The stage is set, the lights are brighter than ever, and all eyes will turn to one man — Rishabh Pant. Leader, match-winner and a player who thrives under pressure, Pant stands at the heart of this high-voltage clash.

The LSG skipper will face his previous team, while eyeing a victory in the opener on their home turf. In the head-to-heads, DC leads 4-3 since their first clash in 2022.

Under lights on Tuesday, Pant had a busy match-eve — checking the condition of the pitch, doing some shadow practice and then having a long mid-pitch chat with Mitchell Marsh.

Ahead of this current season, Pant sweated it out in the preparatory camp for a fortnight. After modest returns last season — where he managed just 269 runs — Pant understands the responsibility to prove himself. When he was asked what position Pant would bat, LSG head coach Justin Langer was unwilling to give it away. "I'm not going to reveal it . There is a lot of talent there and there may be a bit of a problem of whom to pick and or not," he said.

Apart from Langer, the LSG squad has a numbr of thinking heads guiding them, with global director Tom Moody, strategic cricket advisor Kane Williamson and bowling coach Bharat Arun making up a formidable array.

The top order responsibility will once again be carried by overseas players Adien Markram, Mitch Marsh and Nicholas Pooran, while the middle order bears a very Indian face.

The LSG pace battery, led by the experienced Mohammed Shami, appears charged for a long season ahead. Shami will be assisted by Anrich Nortje, Mayank Yadav, Avesh Khan Mohsin Khan, Naman Tiwari and Akash Singh. Digvesh Rathi, M Siddhartha and Wanindu Hasaranga form part of the spin department.

The Ekana ground staff have prepared a red soil square, expected to provide good bounce to the pacers.

Sunil Kumar

LSG skipper Rishabh Pant (2nd from right) and teammates inspect the Ekana pitch in Lucknow on Tuesday

WEATHER
29°C

5 LSG have lost five out of the last six IPL games played between April 22, 2025 and May 27, 2025.
—Stats: Rajesh Kumar

"It's always tough for fast bowlers in India. The wickets are good for batting and the grounds are small. So you have to be mentally very strong. Preparation is not just about skills, it's also about how you handle pressure. If we execute our plans well, we can still do well even in these situations."
—Dushmantha Chameera
DELHI CAPITALS PACER

Lack of experience with bat, poor fielding cost CSK dear

Coach Michael Hussey Stresses '100%' Belief In Super Kings' Batting Unit

Sourav.M@timesofindia.com

Guwahati: Chennai Super Kings have before been in the kind of situations they found themselves in against Rajasthan Royals on Monday. But usually, on those occasions they had experience in the batting order to bail them out — be it a MS Dhoni, a Suresh Raina or a Faf du Plessis in their element.

However, trading experience for fresh faces in a new-look batting order while in a rebuilding phase, meant that the five-time champions could never recover from the wobbly start they experienced here. Notwithstanding the moist wicket and overcast conditions on a red-soil pitch in the first innings, CSK batters were found lacking application on an intriguing track that helped RR bowlers execute their plans to near perfection.

"They (RR) outplayed us today, but I think it was a good toss to win. The pitch had been under cover for a long time. There was certainly some movement early and our batters probably struggled to adjust to that movement," CSK batting coach Michael Hussey said after their eight-wicket loss on Monday.

Captain Ruturaj Gaikwad, disappointed with his batters' capitulation, echoed Hussey's thoughts. "I felt the conditions at the start were really tough, especially when facing Jofra (Archer) and (Nandre) Burger. They bowled brilliant lengths, and even after that, facing a medium pacer (Sandeep Sharma) (it) was slightly tough," the opener told broadcasters.

"You could see that even the spinners were getting some assistance. Yes, we could have been better in batting; we would have taken the game deep, shown some batsmanship, maybe taken it till 150-160," he added.

Despite the beating, Hussey stressed on the team's belief in its batting unit. "Hundred per cent, we'll still be backing this team. There's no doubt about that. I'm sure a few guys will say, in hindsight, 'Maybe I could have played a bit differently,' but on another day it comes off, and they change the momentum of the game. I don't want this performance to cloud or put doubt and fear into our team, because I don't think players perform at their best when they are second guessing themselves," he said.

Losing half of the side for just 51 runs in the eighth over — and the first by Ravindra Jadeja in RR colours after the inaugural IPL title-winning season — Shivam Dube was in with a responsibility to rescue CSK. But after hitting a six off the very first ball he faced, Dube fell victim to poor shot selection forced by Jadeja's plot in the last ball.

Acknowledging the former CSK veteran's mastery, Hussey said, "Jadeja is a wily character. He's been around a long time, and it was a clever piece of bowling. Jadeja won the battle today, but hopefully Dube can win it next time."

Defending a small total is never easy for the bowlers if you're not backed by the fielders. Monday saw CSK fumbling in the field, too. Vaibhav Sooryavanshi was dropped in the very first ball of the chase and they leaked runs and boundaries as well.

"So we'll take a few learnings from it. We want to try and put this one behind us quickly and move on back to Chennai," the former CSK opener said before signing off with a promise to regroup fast.

Meat of the bat over cake for Sooryavanshi's 15th birthday

Sourav.M@timesofindia.com

Guwahati: When you turned 15, how did you celebrate your birthday?

When Vaibhav Sooryavanshi turned a year older on Mar 27, he didn't follow the midnight cake ritual. Slightly unusual for adolescents of his age. Instead, the hard-hitting teenage prodigy helped himself to a 15-ball half-century in Rajasthan Royals' season opener against Chennai Super Kings five days later.

"I didn't really do anything," Sooryavanshi revealed to the broadcasters post-game, "There was supposed to be a cake cutting, but I went to sleep early to avoid the cake-smearing."

He may have escaped the cake-smearing but in tearing into the CSK attack Monday, Sooryavanshi becomes the third joint fastest 50 in the IPL. It got everyone watching, and those hearing, involved and invested in the newly-turned 15-year-old's exploits. Calls came to not wait upon a rare talent as his and have the Samastipur boy fast-tracked into the Indian team. He already had a breakaway season last year capped by the second fastest IPL century.

With only 127 runs to defend, CSK could only watch the boy wonder reducing the game to a one-sided affair in virtually no time as his blitzkrieg helped Royals to 70 without loss after powerplay.

"I do think about defence, but today our plan was to control the game in the powerplay because in a small chase, if the bowling team does well (in the initial overs), the game can tilt their way, but our powerplay went really well. Initially the wicket felt a bit sticky, but as the ball got older it started coming onto the bat nicely ," Sooryavanshi explained about his aggressive approach.

Captain Riyan Parag was also in awe of the youngster's hitting prowess. "What I tell him is, 'You're going to play 14 games and regardless of what goes on in the game, it shouldn't bother you. What goes around in the media shouldn't bother you. You just go out there'. He loves to bat. I've made sure, I've told the coaches, that he gets as much batting as he wants. Then he goes and does something like that," Riyan said after the match.

"Sitting in the dugout till the fourth over, Dhruv (Jurel) and me were simply in awe. We were like, 'What is happening?' 'How is he doing this?' The pitch looked totally different from the first innings. But then I'm really happy to have him in my team," Riyan gushed.

On whether he was tutored by the coaches that the opposition bowlers would attack him, Sooryavanshi grinned, "The coaches did not specifically say that bowlers would attack me. Everyone else was already saying that, but they just told me that they back me and I should stick to my natural game and play according to the situation."

Crediting Yashasvi Jaiswal for the guidance in between balls and overs, he added, "Jaiswal keeps communicating with me after every ball. He tells me when to take singles, keeps giving me the strike, and encourages me to keep playing my shots if the ball is coming nicely onto the bat."

And his natural game was such that Jaiswal, owner of IPL's fastest-ever fifty, off 13 balls, was happy to give his younger partner the strike and be content with an unbeaten 36-ball 38.

TAMPERING ROW: PCB BANS FAKHAR FOR TWO GAMES

Lahore: The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) has suspended Fakhar Zaman for two Pakistan Super League matches after the batter was found guilty of ball-tampering during Lahore Qalandars' four-wicket defeat by Karachi Kings on Sunday. The 35-year-old denied the charge, but match referee Roshan Mahanama upheld the offence.

Afridi fined $3500 for breaching hotel security protocol

Shaheen Afridi was fined $3,500 by Lahore Qalandars for breaching security protocol at the team hotel during the PSL. In a letter to the PCB, police accused Afridi and Sikandar Raza of disregarding directives and forcefully escorting four visitors to Raza's room. AGENCIES

How Fischer & Carlsen influenced change in format

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

The impact of former world champion Bobby Fischer on chess is felt not just through Fischer clocks (with the provision of increment per move) or the Fischer Random (now called Freestyle), but also in the pairings principles, especially for a high-stakes tournament like the World Championship Candidates in Cyprus.

Players from the same federation (country) are paired against each other as early as possible. This is to avoid suspicion of players who are already out of title contention throwing a full point or agreeing for a friendly draw with a compatriot and helping them advance through the standings to clinch the challenger spot.

Divya Deshmukh and K Humpy, the top-2 finishers in the Women's WC, were supposed to play in the first round (and the eighth round which is a starting point of the return leg with reversed colours). This was avoided only because Humpy withdrew due to safety concerns from the war in West Asia and Ukranian Anna Muzychuk took her place. But Divya and R Vaishali did face off in the second round. And so did Americans Caruana vs Nakamura, Chinese Tan Zhongyi vs Zhu Jiner and Russians Kateryna Lagno vs Aleksandra Goryachkina in the opening rounds.

CANDIDATES CHESS

Curacao Candidates 1962

The Fischer connection vis-a-vis the pairings happened in 1962 when he alleged that the Soviets agreed to draw against themselves but fought against him. It had some merit since the top-3 had 12 games drawn among themselves and the average number of moves in (agreed) draws among Soviets was just 19.

FIDE took note of that and introduced knockout format in the Candidates starting 1965-66. Until Magnus Carlsen (world No. 1 since 2010) withdrew from the Candidates saying the knockout format of just four games is a bit of a lottery and hence puts too much pressure on the players.

London 2013

FIDE changed the Candidates format to the eight-player double round-robin that paved the way for Carlsen's entry as the highest rated player in the 2013 London candidates. This time he was against seven players from six different countries but with all having Soviet connections.

The last round pairing was Carlsen vs Peter Svidler and Vassyl Ivanchuk vs Valdimir Kramnik. Though Carlsen was the joint leader with Kramnik, the Norwegian enjoyed numeric tiebreak advantage over the Russian. And when Kramnik's former second Svidler defeated Carlsen, it boiled down to Ivanchuk not dropping half a point against Kramnik.

Sindarov takes down Pragg to join Caruana in lead

Amit.Sampat@timesofindia.com

Nagpur: World Cup winner Javokhir Sindarov sacrificed his knight for two pawns to end the winning run of Praggnanandhaa R and join Fabiano Caruana in lead. The third round of the Candidates also witnessed a great fall of China in Cyprus on Tuesday as all three Chinese players lost their respective games.

Caruana took just 19 moves to break the defensive Chinese wall when Wei Yi made a blunder on the 17th turn and the American world No. 3 jumped to a decisive advantage. Two moves later, Caruana became the first to take the lead.

The last game of the open field between archrivals Sindarov and Pragg saw some dramatic turn of events, with the Uzbek turning the tables on his rival. As early as the 13th move, Sindarov offered his knight and Pragg became a piece up but was two pawns down. The Sindarov move also displaced Pragg's king.

In women's, India's lowest-ranked Candidate, Vaishali Rameshbabu, secured her third successive draw when the she held Ukraine's Anna Muzychuk. In the last game, Divya Deshmukh drew the lost battle against Russia's experienced Aleksandra Goryachkina in a marathon contest that lasted for 81 moves and 5.30 hours.

Woods told police he was looking at phone

Tiger Woods told authorities he was looking down at his phone and did not realize the truck in front of him had slowed down before his rollover crash in Florida last week, according to a probable cause affidavit obtained on Tuesday.

According to the report, Woods had two hydrocodone pills in his pocket and officers observed him to be lethargic, slow, "sweating profusely" with eyes that were bloodshot, glassy and pupils that were "extremely dilated".

When asked during the criminal DUI investigation if he took any prescription medication, the report said the 50-year-old golfer replied "I take a few" while adding he had done so earlier in the morning. Woods' manager did not immediately respond when asked to comment on details of the probable cause affidavit.

A Martin County Sheriff's deputy wrote in the report that Woods, when asked about the collision, said he was looking at his cell phone and changing the radio station which caused him not to see a truck slowing down before the crash. The officer said in the report he observed Woods "limping and stumbling" and added that the golfer told him he has had seven back surgeries and over 20 operations on his leg.

AFP

TOUGH TIMES: Tiger Woods

Woods, a 15-time major champion and the greatest golfer of his generation, was arrested last Friday afternoon on a charge of driving under the influence after his Land Rover rolled over on a two-lane road near his Jupiter Island home. He was released on bail later that night. No one was injured in the crash. The officer also noted in the report that Woods was "extremely alert and talkative" and had "hiccups during the entire investigation." Woods told the officer he has a limp and that his ankle seizes while walking. REUTERS

Reethushree wins 400m gold

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Bengaluru: Karnataka continued to dominate at the Khelo India Tribal Games (KITG), which is currently underway in Raipur. On Tuesday, Karnataka collected two gold, a silver, and two bronze medals to take their tally to 19 gold, seven silver, and seven bronze to remain on top of the medal tally.

In athletics, Reethushree lived up to her reputation and claimed the 400 metres event in 58.63 seconds. The youngster has been a constant performer on the Khelo India platform, having won the gold at the Khelo India Youth Games in the 2023-24 season. Meanwhile, Karnataka's other gold medal of the day came in the 68 kg women's wrestling event, with Prinsita Siddhi taking the top prize.

TRIBAL GAMES

RESULTS: (KARNATAKA ONLY):
Athletics: Women: 400m: 1. Reethushree 58.63s; **Men: 400m:** 3. Ramu 49.60s. **Wrestling: Women: 57kg:** 2. Shalina Siddhi; 3. Amulya Kundargi; **68 kg:** 1. Prinsita Siddi.

INDIA LINE UP ARGENTINA TEST

Marijne Confident Two Squads Not Needed For World Cup & Asian Games

Manuja.Veerappa
@timesofindia.com

Pics: TOI

SHIFT IN FOCUS: The India team will undergo a nine-day camp in Bengaluru before travelling to Argentina

Bengaluru: Following a tumultuous 2025, the Indian women's hockey team started the season by qualifying for the FIH World Cup, to be held in Belgium and the Netherlands later this year. The qualifiers in Hyderabad last month also marked the first assignment of chief coach **Sjoerd Marijne** in his second stint with the side.

That box ticked, the Dutchman has now shifted focus to a packed season ahead. The probables have assembled at the SAI South Centre

HOCKEY

here for a nine-day camp starting Wednesday before travelling to Argentina for a four-match bilateral series against the higher-ranked hosts, who sit three places above world No. 8 India.

Speaking to TOI on the eve of the camp, Marijne, who took over the reins in January, said, "We made really good progress over the last couple of months in terms of defensive structure and fitness. That said, there are still improvements to be made there. In the short camp before Argentina, the focus will be on fitness, which is an ongoing process. We will also work on the technical and mental side as well."

The Argentina tour, he said, will also provide opportunities to test bench strength. "I'm very happy we can play there because it gives exposure to girls who didn't play the World Cup qualifiers. We are taking 24 players, so everyone will get at least one match."

Marijne believes the tour will serve as a key barometer of the team's mental readiness. "We will assess how they perform under pressure against one of the best teams in the world. That gives us a very good insight into our progress," he added.

WORKLOAD MANAGEMENT

With the World Cup ending less than three weeks before the Asian Games — the continental Olympic qualifier — questions have been raised about workload and squad rotation. However, Marijne, drawing from his experience in 2018, is not inclined to make sweeping changes.

"Back then, people said you can't play two big tournaments well. But we reached the World Cup quarterfinals and followed it up with a silver medal at the Asian Games," he said, "The World Cup will help us prepare better. The main focus is winning gold at the Asian Games and qualifying for the Olympics."

He also underlined the importance of exposure to high-pressure environments. "Playing in the Netherlands in front of full crowds will help the players mentally. Every match is an opportunity to improve. Also, during the World Cup, we can keep training. After the competition, we will have a small camp and then head to Japan," he stated.

Heading into his second camp since taking charge, Marijne expressed satisfaction over the team's fitness levels and reduced injury concerns. Apart from Sangita Kumari, who is recovering from an ACL injury, the rest of the squad is fit and showing marked improvement.

"When we started, about 13 or 14 of the girls were carrying injuries. Now, only one is. The first step was to get them back into shape, and I think we've achieved that. Next, we need to focus on further improvements. Our goal is for the girls to play pain-free in matches," he added.

Williams impresses on debut

Scores Opener In India's 2-1 Win Over Hong Kong

Rayson.Tennyson
@timesofindia.com

AIFF

ON TARGET: Ryan Williams (left) impressed on his India debut

Kochi: India earned their first win in the AFC Asian Cup 2027 Qualifiers with a 2-1 victory over Hong Kong at the Jawaharlal Nehru International Stadium in Kochi on Tuesday. Ryan Williams made an instant impact in India colours, scoring just four minutes after kick-off to set the tone for an impressive performance. Akash Mishra scored the other goal for India in the 50th minute while Everton Camargo pulled one back for Hong Kong in the 65th minute.

FOOTBALL

Already out of contention for the continental showpiece, India ended their campaign with five points — from one win and two draws — and at the bottom of Group C.

This was a different-looking Indian side under Khalid Jamil. Largely known for his conservative approach, Jamil's team played with attacking intent from the start against Hong Kong. India were sharp going forward and equally disciplined at the back. Driven on by a vocal home crowd, India took the lead early in the fourth minute.

Manvir Singh surged down the right flank before delivering a low cross into the box. Williams timed his run perfectly and calmly fired into the net to give India a dream start.

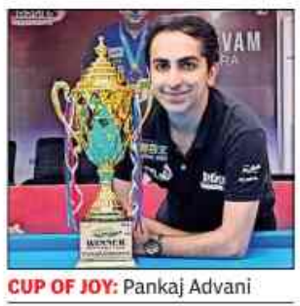
Hong Kong tried to build through short passes, but India's midfield pressed effectively and denied them space. Forced to change approach, the visitors opted for long balls, most of them aimed at Manuel Bleda. However, centre-back Sandesh Jhingan dealt with the threat confidently, repeatedly winning aerial duels and clearing the danger.

India doubled their advantage in the 50th minute through Akash Mishra. Rahul Bheke launched one of his trademark long throws from the right, and the ball fell kindly for Mishra. The defender struck it promptly, sending the ball into the top-left corner for a superb finish.

With a two-goal cushion, India briefly lost some intensity, allowing Hong Kong a way back into the contest. A through ball from deep released forward Everton Camargo, who managed to get past Jhingan. Goalkeeper Gurpreet Singh rushed off his line to narrow the angle, but Camargo stayed composed and finished well. Despite conceding, India remained in control for most of the match and held on comfortably to secure a deserved win. The result marked an encouraging step forward for Jamil's side, who combined attacking purpose with defensive solidity to collect three valuable points in the qualifying campaign.

Advani clinches maiden pool title

TIMES NEWS NETWORK



CUP OF JOY: Pankaj Advani

Pankaj Advani added another feather to his cap by winning his maiden National 9-ball pool title in Ludhiana, Punjab, on Tuesday.

In the final, played at the Rotary Bhawan, the PSPB cueist outplayed Nitin Sharma of Chandigarh 11-6 in the race-to-11 affair. Advani, who stayed away from the fast-paced event

NATIONALS

for over 25 years, made it a memorable debut. "I can't believe it, this is a very different title," said the Bengaluru cueist, who has 28 world titles in billiards and snooker.

Advani was a bit slow at the start, allowing his rival to take a 3-1 lead. But once he caught up with Nitin at 3-3, there was no looking back. He kept his opponent guessing with his safety play, and even when he erred, Nitin failed to capitalise.

Advani had a fine break and run in the 13th rack and came up with a brilliant run after a difficult pot of No. 2 in the next to tighten his grip at 9-5. A short break helped Nitin return rejuvenated as he took the 15th rack. But he was unlucky to go in-off after potting No. 9 to allow Advani to inch closer.

The 40-year-old Advani had a poor opening in the 17th rack but got lucky to block Nitin, who left Advani with an opening. The Bengalurean gladly took the offering to lift the title.

Meanwhile, Karnataka's Natasha Chethan entered the junior girls' final with a 6-4 win over Jiya Sehgal of Punjab. In a junior boys' last-four contest, Karnataka cueist Laksh Sharma eased to a 6-1 win over Delhi's Rehaan Misra.

Results (9-ball pool): Men: Final: Pankaj Advani (PSPB) bt Nitin Sharma (Chd) 11-6. **Third-place playoff:** S Shrikrishna (PSPB) bt Kushal Chandrashekar (Kar) 7-2. **Junior boys: Semis:** Aarav Sancheti (Mah) bt Mayur Garg (Guj) 6-1; Laksh Sharma (Kar) bt Rehaan Misra (Del) 6-1. **Junior girls: Semis:** Natasha Chethan (Kar) bt Jiya Sehgal (Pun) 6-4; L Shruthi (TN) bt Sanvi Shah (MP) 6-4.

KR Pura register second victory

Krishnarajapura got past a fighting Byatrayanapura 1-0, thanks to an own goal, to record their second win of the Chief Minister's Cup football tournament in Bengaluru on Tuesday. Sandeep Kumar Saikia netted the own goal in the 82nd minute to concede the advantage to the rival team.

Results: Group C: Jayanagar 2 (Dhawan MVD 33, Sreekala N 90+4) drew with Yelahanka 2 (Prajwal S, Manoj Kumar 72); **Group D:** KR Pura 1 (Sandeep Kumar Saikia 82-og) bt Byatarayanapura 0.

Dhyanchand HC, B'luru prevail: Shreyas, Vivek and Jason scored a brace each to power Dhyanchand Hockey Club, Bengaluru, to a 8-1 win over Major Dhyanchand Hockey Club, Dharwad, in the KSHA 'B' division hockey league championship in Bengaluru on Tuesday. Rama and Mike sounded the board once each, while Sunil P struck in vain for the Dharwad side.

Results: Dhyanchand HC, Bengaluru 8 (Shreyas 2, 3, Vivek 11, 25, Jason 14, 24, Rama 28, Mike 43) bt Major Dhyanchand HC, Dharwad 1 (Sunil P 48).

Today's matches: Garuda HC vs Dharwad Dist HA (1.30 pm); Bangalore Friends HC vs Naveen HC (3 pm).

Adarsh, Poorvi to lead K'taka: Adarsh Govind Mutagar and Poorvi

ROUND-UP

Poovamma KA will lead the Karnataka State Sub Junior boys' and girls' teams, respectively, in the 16th Hockey India Sub Junior National Championship, to be held from April 1 to 12. The men's tournament will be held at Rajgir and the women's competition in Ranchi.

Squads: Boys: Aketi Jai Durga Prakash, Preetham Gowda HS, Jeevankumar Durgappa Pujar, Krupank D, Naaganaboyina Manikanta, Adarsh Govind Mutagar (capt), Aathmik Deep M, Pradyot Ponanna TN, Preetham Shyam Manapati, Sanchay Thammaiah BP, Daiwik Ponnanna AC, Likith BP, Muthanna PA, Pratham Poovaiah MB, Preetham HH, Samridh Chendanda, Prateek Rajesh Yarkal, Naaganaboyina Vinayakasree Harshwardhan; **Support Staff:** PL Thimmanna and Ramachandra P. **Girls:** Pooja Dharwad, Verna Bojamma KP, Gana MT, Kusumanjali SM, Sukanya Mugappa Jakkannavar, Yashika KK, Madhurya GS, Basamma Shivappa Huggennavar, Smitha HG, Poorvi Poovamma KA (capt), Tejal Bopanna, Preeti Neelaraddi, Thaniya MM, Lakshya Ponnakka KM, Saraswathi HY, Shilpa Madiwalappa Kanajanavar, Sinchana KP, Vidya Ponnamma MU; **Support Staff:** Felix Alwin and Seema AP.

NRI Triple Power wins: NRI Triple Power, ridden by Mukesh Kumar, won the Ardent Knight Plate over 1600 metres, the feature of the Hyderabad races on Tuesday. TNN

Beagles outplay Chikkamagaluru

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Bengaluru: Beagles Basketball Club registered a 79-54 win over Chikkamagaluru District in a boys' super league match of the State Junior Basketball Championship here on Tuesday.

In the boys' section, Beagles, HBR BC, Viveks SC,

BASKETBALL

DK District, PPC and MNK Rao Park BC entered the final league-cum-knockout stage. Meanwhile, in the girls' category, DYES Vidyanagar, Beagles, Mandya District, Bangalore Vanguards and Viveks SC entered the round robin league.

Results (Super League): Boys: Beagles BC 79 (Harshan 25, Srijan 14) bt Chikkamagaluru Dist 54 (Om Shethy 13, Sujoy 12) HT 35-33; DYES Bangalore 58 (Vaibhav 17) bt Lakshyan BC 32 (Abinav 10) HT 19-9; PPC 93 (Ryan 28, Aditya 19) bt Hoop-7 BC 43 (Raghav 16) HT 51-28; HBR BC 56 (Samveg 20, Rishith 11) bt JSC 43 (Arshad 12) HT 30-24; Viveks SC 72 (Anshul 32, Bhavy 11) bt Mysore Dist 'A' 50 (Shlok 14) HT 36-22; MNK Rao Park BC 75 (Yashas 26, Aakash 16) bt Yelahanka BC 27 (Sanket 10) HT 28-16. **Girls:** B'lore Vanguards 68 (Aditi S 25, Mahek Sharma 18) bt PPC 24 (Shinani 6) HT 42-4; DYES Vidyanagar 53 (Deepika 24, Ishitha 10) bt Mounts Club 50 (Nidhi Umesh 34, Nilaaya 16) HT 28-29; Beagles 55 (Swathi 18) bt Mysore Dist 'A' 41 (Shravani 17) HT 21-19; Mandya Dist 73 (Manasa 19) bt Rajmahal BC 51 (Shreya 21) HT 39-28; Viveks SC 61 (Devipriya 24, Manasvi 14) bt Bharath SU 49 (Archana 13, Miriam 12) HT 34-20.

SNAP SHOTS

Priya scripts dominant win

Priya recorded a dominant 5-0 victory but Jadumani Singh went down fighting on the second day of the Asian Boxing Championships in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia on Tuesday. In the women's 60kg category, Priya recorded a unanimous 5-0 triumph over Kazakhstan's Rimma Volossenko. Jadumani fought hard but could not avert a 2-3 defeat in a split decision against Japan's Rimma Yamaguchi.

Manika prevails: The Indian table tennis stars Manika Batra and Sreeja Akula had contrasting outings on day two of the International Table Tennis Federation (ITTF) World Cup 2026 in Macau on Tuesday. Manika secured a a 3-2 (11-7, 11-2, 14-16, 5-11, 11-6) win over world No. 42 Lily Zhang of the USA. Sreeja made a promising start against Portugal's Fu Yu before going down 1-3 (8-11, 11-9, 15-13, 11-8).

Bhowneesh, Kynan impress: Indian trap shooters Bhowneesh Mendiratta and Kynan Chenai enjoyed an eventful opening day, shooting with precision and consistency to put themselves in contention for a place in the finals at the inaugural ISSF Shotgun World Cup in Tangier, Morocco, on Tuesday. Both Bhowneesh and Kynan hit 72 targets to be in joint sixth place alongside seven others after three rounds of 25 shots each, totalling 75 clay targets.

Abhay, Anahat bag top honours: Abhay Singh has been declared outstanding Men's Player of the Year 2025 by the Asian Squash Federation, while rising teenaged sensation Anahat Singh was selected for the top honours in the girls section (juniors). The Indian boys team was picked for the men's team award, according to the awardees list released by Asian Squash Federation (ASF).

India ready to face Bhutan: Defending champions India will look to rise to the occasion when they take on Bhutan in the semifinals of the SAFF U-20 Championship at the National Stadium in Male on Wednesday. The other semifinal is between Nepal and Bangladesh. The Indian men's team heads into the semifinals after making full use of the three-day break following their group-stage matches.

Spurs roll past Bulls: Victor Wembanyama continued his brilliant play by racking up 41 points and 16 rebounds while helping the host San Antonio Spurs to a 129-114 victory over the Chicago Bulls on Monday in a late-season inter conference clash.

Results: Miami 119 bt Philadelphia 109; Atlanta 112 bt Boston 102; San Antonio 129 bt Chicago 114; Phoenix 131 bt Memphis 105; Minnesota 124 bt Dallas 94; Cleveland 122 bt Utah 113; Oklahoma City 114 bt Detroit 110 (OT); LA Lakers 120 bt Washington 101.

Of 33 complaints of sexual harassment, 25 against coaches

Govt Doesn't Maintain Records Of Offences Filed In NSFs: Ministry

Sabi.Hussain@timesofindia.com

New Delhi: The Sports Authority of India (SAI) has received 33 complaints of sexual harassment against its coaches and administrative staff over the past ten years, indicating that more female athletes are coming forward to report such issues. Out of them, a significantly higher number of 25 complaints were filed against coaches.

GRAVE CONCERN

This figure was revealed by sports minister Mansukh Mandaviya in the Lok Sabha, responding to an unstarred question on Monday. According to the minister's reply, six coaches were suspended based on the inquiry committee's findings and the contracts of two were terminated. "With respect to SAI, eight complaints have been filed against administrative staff, and 25 complaints have been filed against coaches since 2016. Out of the said eight cases, two cases are currently pending. For administrative staff, one case penalty was permanent withholding full gratuity as per Rule 9 of CCS (Pension) Rules 1972, while remaining cases were closed without penalty," the minister informed.

"For coaches, based on the findings, actions taken include six suspensions, six minor penalties, and two terminations. Further, no appeal was filed for administrative staff. However, for coaches, eight appeals have been filed by the complainant or the accused against the decisions/recommendations of the inquiry committees," he added.

The minister's submission came on the questions posed by Member of Parliaments (MPs) Adhikari Deepak Dev and Raja Ram Singh. The MPs asked Mandaviya about "the details of total number of complaints regarding sexual harassment received against officials, coaches and support staff associated with the ministry, SAI, affiliated national sports federations (NSFs), SAI centres and other sports institution during the last ten years and the current year".

TEN-YEAR RECORD AT SAI

- **33** sexual harassment complaints
- **25** complaints against coaches
- **Suspension:** 6 coaches. **Termination:** 2
- **Appeals:** Eight athletes weren't satisfied with the inquiry committee's findings
- **Administrative Staff:** In one case, permanent withholding full gratuity.

Revealing that the ministry doesn't maintain data about complaints of sexual harassment filed by the sportspersons with concerned sports federations or bodies, the sports minister stated that no complaints of sexual harassments were reported against officials directly under his ministry during this period.

"The NSFs are voluntary bodies registered under the Societies Registration Act, 1860 / Trusts Act / Companies Act. They are governed by their own constitution and have their own mechanism to redress the grievances/ complaints filed with them by sportspersons," he said.

"The ministry as well as the various organisations under this ministry have also established Internal Complaints Committees (ICCs), which ensure that all employees/trainees/athletes at these locations have access to a mechanism for addressing complaints related to sexual harassment. No complaints in this regard have been filed in the ministry with respect to its officials during the last ten years and the current year," he added.

'IRAN WILL BE AT WORLD CUP'

FIFA Boss Infantino Says Team Will Play Their Group Matches In The US Despite Ongoing War

Antalya: FIFA president Gianni Infantino said on Tuesday that Iran "will be at the World Cup" and will play their group matches in the United States as scheduled, despite the war in West Asia.

"Iran will be at the World Cup," Infantino said at half-time of Iran's friendly against Costa Rica in Turkey.

"That's why we're here. We're delighted because they're a very, very strong team, I'm very happy."

"I've seen the team, I've spoken to the players and the coach, so everything is fine," added Infantino, whose attendance at Tuesday's game was unannounced.

Infantino went on to stress that Iran's "matches will be played where they are supposed to be, according to the draw".

The World Cup, being hosted by the United States, Mexico and Canada, starts on June 11. Iran are set to play their first Group G game against New Zealand in Los Angeles on June 15. They are then scheduled to play Belgium in Los Angeles on June 21 and Egypt in Seattle on June 27.

The Iranian football federation said earlier this month it was "negotiating" with FIFA to relocate the country's World Cup matches from the United States to Mexico.

Mexican president Claudia Sheinbaum also said that her country is prepared to host Iran's first-round matches at the tournament if needed. Infantino initially said that US president Donald Trump had given assurances that the Iranian team would still be welcome. But Trump then stated that Iran's team should not travel to the tournament "for their own life and safety". AFP

Reuters

Iranian footballers pay tribute to victims of a strike on a primary school in Iran before the friendly against Costa Rica

NO TIME TO WASTE

At its 140th Annual General Meeting (AGM), The International Football Association Board (The IFAB) approved a package of measures designed to enhance match tempo and reduce time-wasting across the game. It will be implemented in the 2026 FIFA World Cup.

Faster Substitutions: Players being subbed out have a maximum of 10 seconds to leave the pitch. If they take longer, their replacement must wait one minute before entering, leaving the team with 10 men temporarily.

VAR Expansion: Video Assistant Referees can now review second yellow cards that lead to a sending-off and decisions on whether to award corner kicks.

Time Control (5-Second Rule): Players have 5 seconds to take throw-ins and goal kicks. Failure to do so results in a turnover of possession.

Medical Treatment Rule: Players requiring on-field medical attention must leave the pitch and wait one minute before returning, unless they were fouled by an opponent who received a card.

Captain Only Rule: Only the team captain is allowed to approach the referee for explanations. Other players risk a yellow card for crowding the official.

Army control of EFI ends

IOA-Run Ad-Hoc Committee In Place

Sabi.Hussain@timesofindia.com

New Delhi: The Army's decades-long hold over the Equestrian Federation of India (EFI) has ended after the Indian Olympic Association (IOA), as directed by the Delhi high court, formed an ad-hoc committee to run the federation.

Former Madhya Pradesh's minister of sports and youth welfare Yashodhara Raje Scindia has been named chairperson to head the four-member panel. Other members include International Equestrian Federation's (FEI) director (governance) Francisco Lima, advocate Vidushpat Singhania and former EFI joint secretary (technical) Col (retd) Ashok Yadav.

The EFI has remained under judicial scrutiny for years over governance failures, factionalism and non-compliance with the sports code. The EFI last held elections in 2019 for a four-year term and the current executive's tenure ended in 2023.

"The ad-hoc committee shall align the EFI constitution and bye-laws with the national sports governance act 2025 and the rules 2026; restructure the general body and membership framework in accordance with law; ensure that the constitutions and bye-laws of all affiliated state units are compliant; conduct free, fair and transparent elections to the athletes commission; and ensure the lawful constitution of the electoral college," IOA president P T Usha stated in her office order.

Reuters

Romelu Lukaku

Roberto De Zerbi

Lukaku faces Napoli discipline

Romelu Lukaku could be in hot water with Napoli after the Belgium striker failed to turn up for training despite withdrawing from international duty with an injury, the Serie A champions said on Tuesday. The club confirmed Lukaku was a no-show after being called back to their training ground, sparking threats of disciplinary action.

DE ZERBI 'AGREES IN PRINCIPLE'

Roberto De Zerbi has "agreed in principle" to become the new manager of Tottenham Hotspur as the troubled Premier League club bid to avoid relegation, British media reported on Tuesday. Both Sky Sports and Britain's Press Association said they "understood" De Zerbi and Spurs had come to an agreement.

ARGENTINE FOOTBALL CHIEF ACCUSED OF TAX FRAUD

A Buenos Aires judge on Monday formally accused Argentine Football Association (AFA) chief Claudio Tapia and four colleagues of tax fraud. The court ruled Tapia should stand trial for "misappropriation of taxes" and "misappropriation of social security funds" and ordered that 350 million pesos (about $250,000) be impounded as surety.

GHANA SACK COACH AFTER DEFEAT

Otto Addo has been released from his contract as head coach of Ghana, just 72 days before the team plays their first match at the World Cup. It gave no further details on a replacement or the reasons for the termination.

Ghana had lost four friendlies in a row. The latest one was a 1-2 loss to Germany. It is the second time this month that an African team going to the World Cup has changed the coach who was in charge at the 2022 edition in Qatar. Morocco appointed Mohamed Ouahbi to replaced Walid Regragui who took the team to the semis four years ago.

Long and winding road for Iraq before Bolivia playoff

Monterrey: This month, Iraq coach Graham Arnold was stranded in Fujairah, on the eastern coast of the United Arab Emirates, due to the Mideast war. After traveling a long and winding road to reach Mexico, Arnold and Iraq faced Bolivia in the final of their intercontinental playoff in Monterrey in northern Mexico on Tuesday.

Arnold was with his wife in a hotel in Fujairah after a series of Iranian missiles hit nearby before reaching Dubai. The team finally arrived in Monterrey on March 21 after a 25-hour journey. AGENCIES

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THE TIMES

INCLUSIVE OF BANGALORE TIMES |

FIFA PRESIDENT GIANNI INFANTINO SAYS IRAN 'WILL BE AT THE WORLD CUP' AND WILL PLAY THEIR GROUP MATCHES IN US AS SCHEDULED, DESPITE GULF CONFLICT 18

Deadline day sees dozens of Maoists lay down arms

Only 2 Districts Still Labelled LWE-Affected

Rashmi Drolia, Soumitra Bose, Debabrata Mohapatra & Shishir Arya | TNN

Photo: AFP

Dozens of Maoist cadres surrendered across Bastar in Chhattisgarh and Gadchiroli in Maharashtra on the final day of Union home minister Amit Shah's March 31 deadline to end left-wing extremism, while Odisha declared itself free of Naxal influence and scrapped its surrender and rehabilitation policy for those who failed to lay down arms Tuesday.

In Gadchiroli, for long one of the worst affected by Maoist violence, officials described the surrender of nine from Chhattisgarh as significant due to their role in operations spanning both states. Verification will precede rehabilitation benefits, including financial aid and skill training. The Centre has already reclassified Gadchiroli and Gondia in Maharashtra from Maoist-affected districts to "legacy and thrust" category — the final stage before full normalisation.

Officials said coordinated strategy combining sustained security operations and incentives had weakened insurgent morale and encouraged surrenders.

Odisha police said CPI (Maoist) had collapsed in the state with no fresh recruitment. Nine districts that once reported Maoist presence have now been cleared, leaving only a small patch in Kandhamal with limited activity. Forces remain on alert to prevent resurgence.

With this, only Bijapur in Chhattisgarh and West Singhbhum in Jharkhand remain categorised as Maoist-affected districts across the country. On Tuesday, at least 35 insurgents surrendered across five Bastar districts — 25 in Bijapur, five in Dantewada, two each in Sukma and Kanker, and one in Narayanpur — as security forces tightened pressure on Maoist networks. Nine more Maoists crossed Indravati river from Chhattisgarh forests into Maharashtra's Gadchiroli and surrendered with weapons and explosives.

Security forces found 93 weapons, over 7kg gold and Rs 2.9 crore cash from Maoist dumps in Bijapur alone, with the total haul valued at more than Rs 14 crore. In Dantewada, five cadres linked to Dandakaranya special zonal committee surrendered. Police said intelligence provided by them led to the seizure of 40 weapons, including SLR and Insas rifles. SP Gaurav Rai said surrender of "last five active Maoists" had rendered the district Naxal-free.

▶Back to mainstream, P 8

12k jobs in India hit? Oracle begins mass layoffs

Bengaluru: Oracle has started notifying employees about thousands of job cuts as the tech major navigates pressures arising from aggressive expansion into AI data centre infrastructure.

Some reports suggested that up to 12,000 jobs in India could be affected, though this could not be independently verified. The company employs close to 30,000 in India. An email sent to the company didn't elicit a response till press time.

The layoffs have significantly impacted staff at its India development centres, with roles understood to be affected across Oracle Fusion Cloud Applications division as well as Oracle Cloud Infrastructure, including engineering, data centre operations, and AI/ML functions. TNN

▶ Sudden mails, P 15

Infamous XI: J'khand man led team to steal phones during IPL opener

Mastermind, 3 Boys Held; 21 Phones Worth ₹18L Seized

Rajiv.Kalkod@timesofindia.com

Bengaluru: It was a well-stitched plot, off field. An 11-member gang of thieves from Jharkhand came to Bengaluru by air and train two days before IPL inaugural, booked rooms, bought RCB jerseys, stole complimentary passes, surveyed gates and pavilions before pulling off a mobile phone heist at packed Chinnaswamy Stadium on Saturday night. More than 25 handsets were gone in hours.

Cubbon Park police, piecing together the sequence of events based on complaints and CCTV footage, acted equally fast. Within 48 hours, they nabbed four members of the gang, including 26-year-old mastermind Shubham Kumar, and seized 21 mobile phones worth Rs 18 lakh from them. Investigations said most gang members were minors. Police are looking for seven more suspects in the case.

Shubham was arrested from a hotel near Shivajinagar late Monday night. Based on his statement, cops picked up three minors and recovered mobile phones. Investigations said Shubham had sponsored air tickets for two minors and train journey for others. "We suspect Shubham is running a mobile-theft racket with minors," a police officer said.

Phones were stolen mostly from Gates 1, 2 and 3 of the stadium and P3 stand. A few phones were stolen taking advantage of the rush at Cubbon Park Metro station.

▶Cops studied cases, P 2

FLEW TO BENGALURU, STOLE PASSES

- **11-member Jharkhand gang flew to B'luru**, bought RCB jerseys, and melted into the crowd at stadium
- **Picked complimentary passes** from spectators near gates

- **Stole** phones from **gates 1, 2 and 3 and P 3 stand**
- **Filched phones when fans rushed to buy food** during breaks or were exiting stadium
- **Mastermind Shubham Kumar**, 26, arrested within 48 hours; 21 mobile phones worth ₹18 lakh recovered

"Shubham Kumar and gang are part of a larger syndicate operating in different states. Credible info suggests suspects travelled from other states specifically for the event and coordinated their strikes. Our squad worked for two nights to crack the case. As investigations gathered pace, some members fled. We will soon arrest them — **Seemant Kumar Singh** | POLICE COMMISSIONER

Crowd crush at Nalanda temple leaves 9 dead

Biharsharif: Nine pilgrims, eight of them women, died and at least 12 were injured in a stampede caused by an unruly crowd surge Tuesday at Sheetla Mata temple in Bihar's Nalanda district, making this the sixth such tragedy at a shrine or a religious congregation since the Maha Kumbh chaos in Jan 2025.

SHO of Deepnagar station was suspended as the govt sought to fix responsibility for the fatal crush, coinciding with Chaitra month's final darshan of the deity and President Murmu's visit to Nalanda University that hogged the district's law-and-order resources for the day. Toll is likely to increase. TNN

▶₹2 lakh ex gratia, P 7

Post-Elbers, IndiGo picks ex-BA chief William Walsh as CEO

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: IndiGo on Tuesday named DG of International Air Transport Association (IATA) and former British Airways (BA) chief William Walsh as its new CEO.

Airline promoter and MD Rahul Bhatia had assumed charge as CEO in the interim after Pieter Elbers' resignation last month with immediate effect. Elbers, then KLM president and CEO of KLM, was brought to IndiGo about four years ago to expand its international footprint. While the foreign footprint expanded substantially following the Dec schedule collapse, Elbers put in his papers. Bhatia had said the schedule collapse "should never have taken place".

Now, IndiGo has chosen an industry veteran who can help it expand globally. Walsh, who will take charge in Aug, is a trained pilot who has been the CEO of Aer Lingus, British Airways, and then of International Airlines Group, which is a holding company that owns these two airlines along with Iberia, Level and Vueling. He began his career in aviation as a cadet pilot with Aer Lingus in 1979.

▶To join by Aug 3, P 7

FOCUS ON EXPANSION

- William Walsh began his career in aviation as a **cadet pilot with Aer Lingus** in 1979
- Choosing a pilot-turned-mgmt heavyweight with CEO experience shows **Walsh's focus will be equally on operations and expansion**

- Willie, as Walsh is popularly known as, will complete tenure at IATA on July 31, 2026, and is **likely to join IndiGo by Aug 3**

Chanchal Kumar I&B secy, VV Yadav appointed DGCA

New Delhi: Govt on Tuesday appointed Chanchal Kumar, an IAS officer of Bihar cadre, as the new information and broadcasting (I&B) secretary, while designating Sanjay Lohiya as the secretary of department of financial services (DFS). In the bureaucratic reshuffle, Vir Vikram Yadav has been appointed director general of civil aviation (DGCA), replacing Faiz Ahmed Kidwai, **reports Dipak Dash.**

Kidwai, an MP-cadre IAS officer, has been appointed additional secretary in the personnel department. Lohiya will take over as secretary DFS when M Nagaraju retires on May 31.

▶Appointment of secys, P 6

Segregate your waste or pay ₹ 1k fine from today

From April 1, Bengaluru Solid Waste Management Ltd will fine residents Rs 1,000 for not segregating waste, doubling to Rs 2,000 for repeat offences. Under Solid Waste Management Rules, households must separate wet, dry, and sanitary waste, including diapers and biomedical items, for safer disposal. **P 3**

TAX TO BANKING, CHANGES THAT KICK IN TODAY

TAXATION

- New Income Tax Act, 2025 comes into effect, govt promises easier rules and a more friendly dept

New Tax Forms With New Names

- **Form 130** (Replaces Form 16) issued by your employer for salary income
- **Form 131** (Replaces Form 16A) is the certificate for TDS on non-salary income, such as bank interest, rent, or professional fees
- **Form 168** (Replaces Form 26AS) is the consolidated annual statement of all tax-related credits linked to your permanent account number

- **Meal card tax** exemption increased to ₹200 per meal against ₹50 earlier
- **Buybacks** to get less taxing for **shareholders.** Promoters to pay higher tax
- TCS on **overseas travel** packages, remittance for **education, medical** treatment cut to 2%

BANKING

- Push towards cardless cash withdrawals prompts banks to tighten ATM, cash usage rules
- RBI's new rules for digital payments with mandatory two-factor authentication for all transactions: which can include PIN, password, biometrics or tokens

STOCK MARKET

- **Securities transaction tax (STT) on Futures rises from 0.02% to 0.05%**, and the levy on Options goes up from 0.1% to 0.15%
- Simplified expense structure for MFs to enforce transparency by splitting Total Expense Ratio into a core Base Expense Ratio and actual-cost charges for taxes & regulatory charges
- Brokerage caps reduced by Sebi

TRAVEL

- FASTag annual pass fee hiked to ₹3,075, up from ₹3,000; NH toll to rise 3-5%. Besides, toll plazas will turn cashless

CCTV CAMERAS

- Ban on the sale of non-certified CCTV cameras connected to internet from Chinese manufacturers from April 1

Compiled by Saksham Mehta

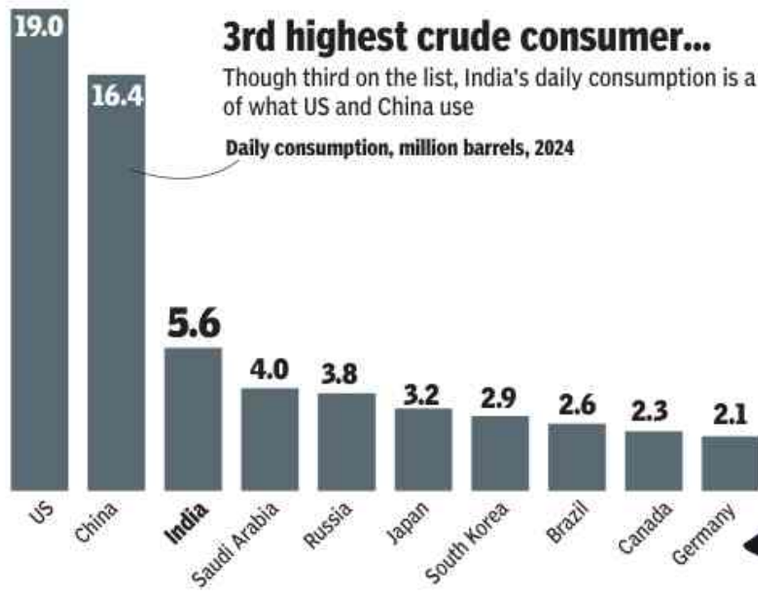
CAN INDIA BRIDGE THE OIL AND GAS GULF?

Good thing is, as GOI's said, there's adequate supplies of oil & gas. But, what if Iran war carries on? Iran's said Hormuz is open to 'friendly' countries, including India. But there's too much uncertainty. The answer may lie in rapidly diversifying import sources. This is already a work in progress. But buying from other suppliers will mean higher freight costs

3rd highest crude consumer...

Though third on the list, India's daily consumption is a fraction of what US and China use

Daily consumption, million barrels, 2024



...But with second highest supply gap

India has barely any oil reserves to speak of, which is also the case with China. Five of the 10 countries with the biggest consumption-production gaps are located in Asia, if Turkiye is left out

Production and consumption gap, million barrels per day, 2024

Country	Production	Consumption	Gap
China	4.3	16.4	**12.1**
India	0.7	5.6	**4.9**
Japan	0.0	3.2	**3.2**
South Korea	0.0	2.9	**2.9**
Germany	0.0	2.1	**2.1**
Singapore	0.0	1.5	**1.5**
France	0.0	1.4	**1.4**
Spain	0.0	1.3	**1.3**
Italy	0.1	1.3	**1.2**
Turkiye	0.0	1.2	**1.2**

Half of crude, LPG comes from Gulf...

In Jan this year, more than 55% of crude oil and liquids, including LPG, imported by India came from the Persian Gulf, up from a little less than 50% in Jan 2025

India's largest import partners (Jan '25 to Jan '26)

Russia was India's biggest supplier last year. While India's dependence on Gulf oil fell to below 40% last Nov, the share of crude and related imports from the region again inched up after India went off Russian oil amid trade negotiations with US. But, with Iran War breaking out, it got a temporary exemption to again procure from Russia

% of India's imports

- Russia: 31.4
- Iraq: 18.8
- S Arabia: 14.1
- UAE: 10.1
- US: 6.7
- Kuwait: 3.6
- Nigeria: 2.7
- Angola: 2.6
- Brazil: 1.6
- Colombia: 1.3
- Others: 7

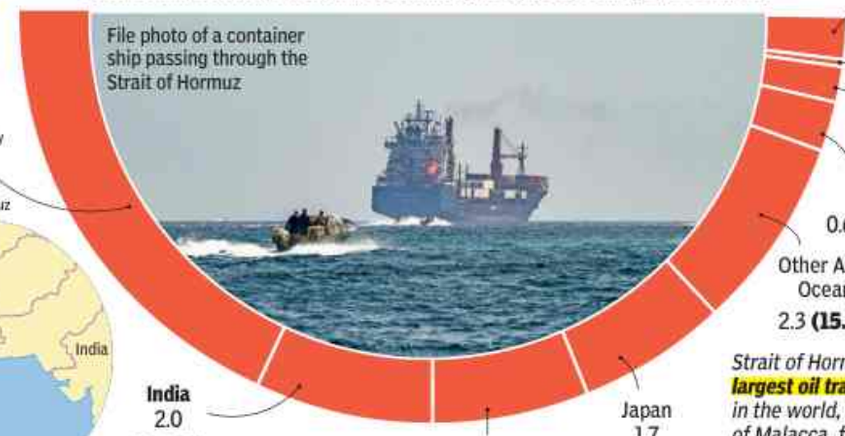
...With big flow through Hormuz

Most of the Gulf oil fields, including in Iran, are located on the Persian Gulf and hence Strait of Hormuz is the cheapest route for moving Gulf oil to India. The country has the second highest share in oil shipments passing through this vital stretch

Crude oil and condensate transported through Strait of Hormuz, by destination

Data is for the first half of 2025

China 5.4 million barrels per day **(36.6%)** share in total oil passing through Hormuz



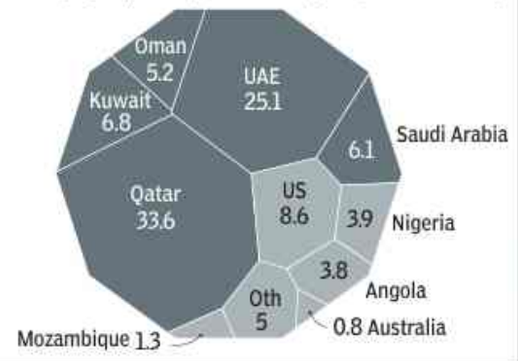
Others 0.6 **(3.8%)**
Saudi Arabia 0.0 **(0.1%)**
US 0.4 **(2.9%)**
Europe 0.6 **(4.0%)**
Other Asia & Oceania 2.3 **(15.3%)**
Japan 1.7 **(11.6%)**
South Korea: 1.7 **(11.8)**
India 2.0 **(13.9%)**

*Strait of Hormuz is the **second largest oil transit chokepoint** in the world, after the Strait of Malacca, from where oil is moved to Far East, China and other South Asian countries*

Dependence on Gulf gas is even bigger...

In the past year, around 80% of India's LNG came from Gulf countries, with the share going up to over 90% in Feb and March 2025. More than 50% of India's natural gas comes from Qatar and UAE

India's top import partners, % share in imports (Jan '25 to Jan '26)



Another energy gap to mind

The gap between consumption and production of natural gas for India was eighth widest in the world in 2024, again because of limited reserves

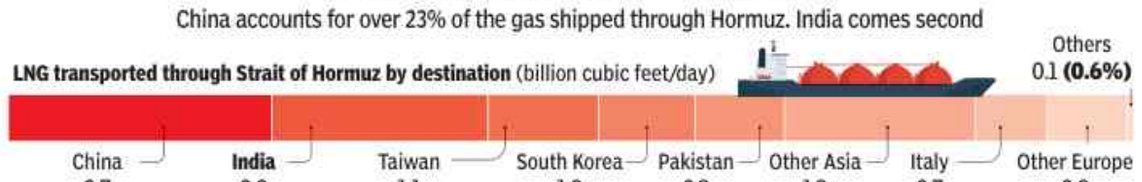
Production and consumption gap, million cubic feet/day, 2024

Country	Production	Consumption	Gap
China	24.0	41.9	**17.9**
Japan	0.0	8.8	**8.8**
Germany	0.4	7.6	**7.2**
Mexico	3.5	9.7	**6.2**
South Korea	0.0	6.1	**6.1**
Italy	0.3	5.7	**5.4**
Turkiye	0.0	4.9	**4.9**
India	3.1	6.8	**3.7**
France	0.0	3.1	**3.1**
UK	3.0	6.0	**3.0**

Hormuz again vital to supplies

China accounts for over 23% of the gas shipped through Hormuz. India comes second

LNG transported through Strait of Hormuz by destination (billion cubic feet/day)



China	**India**	Taiwan	South Korea	Pakistan	Other Asia	Italy	Other Europe	Others
2.7	2.2	1.1	1.0	0.9	1.9	0.7	0.8	0.1
(23.3%)	**(19.2%)**	**(9.8%)**	**(8.6%)**	**(7.9%)**	**(16.9%)**	**(6.4%)**	**(7.1%)**	**(0.6%)**

Share in total shipped through Hormuz

Data is for the first half of 2025 in billion cubic feet per day

So, what are India's options?

GOI said earlier this week that India has 74 days of oil reserves. This includes crude stocks, products (petrol, diesel, jet fuel, etc), and dedicated strategic storage. PM Modi recently said India has 5.3 million tonnes of crude in strategic reserves. GOI also said crude procurement for next two months has been secured

India is trying to diversify LPG sources. It's securing supplies from US, Norway, Russia, Canada, and Argentina. State-run oil companies — IOCL, BPCL, HPCL — have signed a deal to import 2.2 million tonnes of LPG from US in 2026. Some supplies have already arrived. Argentina has also ramped up LPG exports to India

But the economics of transportation is a factor. It takes 5-7 days for a vessel from West Asia to reach India, around 40-42 days from US, Canada and Argentina, about 35 days from Russia, and nearly the same duration from Norway. So, freight charges for non-Gulf LPG will be higher, by as much as 40%, compared to LPG that comes via Hormuz

Research: **Atul Thakur;** Inputs: **Atul Mathur;** Graphic: **Anil Dinod**

Source: The Energy Institute, US Energy Information Administration, Ministry of commerce
Oil production and consumption includes crude oil, shale oil, oil sands, condensates and natural gas liquids: ethane, LPG and naphtha